

***UW-Madison***  
***Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies***  
***MA and PhD Handbook***

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***2017-2018***

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## Important Contacts and Resources

### Program Website

<https://english.wisc.edu/intertheatrestudies/>

### Program Officers

Program Director: Mary Trotter

Director of the Theatre for Youth Program: Manon van de Water

Graduate Coordinator: Brenda Weiss

Department Manager, English (Program's Administrative Home): Spring Sherrod

Department Chair, English (Program's Administrative Home): Russ Castronovo

Minority Liaison: Mary Trotter

Sexual Harassment Complaint Contact: Manon van de Water

Steering Committee Members: Christine Garlough, Paola Hernández, Michael Peterson,  
Mike Vanden Heuvel

### Academic Policies and Procedures in the Graduate School

The Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program complies with the Graduate School's policies and procedures regarding such issues as curriculum and administration, student grievances and appeals, and incidents of discrimination or harassment. **If you have a question, concern or complaint about your experience as a student in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies, please contact your advisor, the appropriate program officer (see list above) and/or the Program Director. For information about the Graduate School's policies on these and other administrative concerns please go to this link: Academic Policies and Procedures: <http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>**

## Introduction

The Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program at UW-Madison prepares MA and PhD students to pursue innovative, interdisciplinary research in theatre studies, and to relate their scholarly research to production and/or teaching. The MA can serve as a preparatory degree for the PhD, or as a terminal degree for students seeking greater exposure to theatre studies beyond the undergraduate degree. Through rigorous coursework and participation in a variety of artistic production processes, the PhD program prepares graduates for positions as college and university researchers and instructors as well as public intellectuals, dramaturgs, and critics.

The program's faculty are leaders in theatre and performance studies, whose scholarship and engagement with the profession is recognized nationally and internationally. Our students work closely with faculty who have a teaching appointment in ITS, as well as affiliated ITS faculty members in such fields as African Studies, African-American studies, Art, Art History, Classics, Communication Arts, English, French and Italian, Gender and Women's Studies, German, Music, Spanish and Portuguese, Theatre and Drama, and Visual Cultures.

Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies attracts students from across the United States as well as internationally, and creates opportunities for students to engage in teaching and practice as part of their research. Many of our students participate in theatre and performance groups as actors, dramaturgs, directors, devisers, designers and playwrights on and off campus, allowing them to experiment with a wide range of performance modes. At the same time, all students are expected to develop a strong foundation in current practices in theatre history, theatre and performance theory and dramatic literature, in addition to their specific area of interest.

The MA program requires completion of 30 credits, including 5-8 thesis credits taken in the final semester of course work; the PhD program requires completion of 69 credit hours for course work and a dissertation. Continuing MAs may transfer up to 24 credit hours towards the PhD requirements; incoming PhDs who have received the MA from another institution may transfer a maximum of 18 credit hours in consultation with the Program Director.

This Handbook provides you with general information about our programs, including requirements, opportunities, and timelines. While it offers an important overview of graduate studies in the department and on campus, it is only a guide. You should stay in close touch with your advisor, the Program Director, the Graduate Coordinator, the Department Administrator, and other administrators, professors, and mentors to gain the most from your experience at UW-Madison.

## Overview of MA and PhD Programs

### Degree Curricula and Requirements

During the first semester of study, all new MA and PhD students take the proseminar, Introduction to Research in Theatre, to familiarize themselves with the methods and materials of theatre research and writing. Thereafter, Master's students in ITS construct an individualized program of study culminating in a thesis. PhD students take a range of lecture/discussion and seminar-style courses in dramatic literature, history, and theory approved by the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program; construct a Minor on the basis of courses in other related disciplines; and fulfill foreign language requirements. They are admitted to dissertator status after an oral exam based on a selection of research papers (Prelim A), followed by a dissertation proposal defense (Prelim B), and the final dissertation defense. MA and PhD students also participate in the production process by serving as dramaturgs, assistant directors, performers, designers, or technicians, working on theatre and performance projects on and off campus.

### Learning Goals and Objectives for the MA and PhD

- Thorough familiarity with the theory, history, and practice of drama and theatre as collaborative cultural forms
- Historical understanding of the diverse global locations of theatre and the intercultural contact among theatre traditions, especially as these multiply in the modern and contemporary periods and performance, as well as to diverse cultural activities
- Intensive training in the methods and materials of theatre research and writing, leading to original scholarly projects that range in complexity from term papers to dissertations
- Understanding of theatre-as-practice, and of the reciprocal relations between research and practice, through participation in the production process
- Broad-based preparation for future careers as theatre scholars, teachers, and practitioners
- Professionalization in the discipline of theatre through participation in conferences and submission of work to scholarly journals

### Theatre for Youth Specialization

The Theatre for Youth Program is a comprehensive program for graduate students who are interested in interdisciplinary studies in theatre and drama with, by, and for children and youth. TFY students train in the artistic and educational aspects of theatre and drama, theoretical and practical, formal and informal, production and process oriented, with and for youth. A strong emphasis is placed on community outreach and involvement. The Theatre for Youth Program at UW-Madison stresses the potential and value of theatre and drama both as an art form and as a teaching method. Courses offered incorporate theory, history, methodology, and practice. In addition to TFY in the United States, the program maintains a strong international focus through course content, methods, and productions.

Qualified students may pursue a MA or PhD degree in the broad area of Theatre For Youth, which includes Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), Drama for Teaching and Learning, and Applied Theatre. The student is expected to develop a thorough background in traditional

theatre, i.e., world drama, history, criticism, and production. In addition, the student may develop and pursue special interests, research, and production in theatre and drama as it applies specifically to young people, pre-K to post high school. Considerable coursework is expected in other departments of the University to enhance this area of specialization.

Candidates for the MA degree with a specialization in Theatre for Youth will be advised by the Director of the Theatre for Youth Program and must take at least 12 credits in Theatre for Youth. They will gear their thesis to any aspect of the field of theatre for youth in consultation with their advisor. The thesis should be a product of the student's independent research, carried out in consultation with the Advisor and other faculty members with expertise in the field.

PhD students in Theatre for Youth are advised by the Director of the Theatre for Youth Program, and take the TFY courses offered by the department in the course of their studies. They will gear their dissertation to any aspect of the field of Theatre for Youth in consultation with their advisor. In addition, at least one of their three Prelim A papers should discuss an aspect of theatre and drama for youth.

### **Teaching and Project Assistantships**

The Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program supports its graduate students as much as possible through Teaching, Research, and Project Assistantships. It is our policy to provide assistance, when available, for at least three years to PhD students. MAs matriculating into the PhD program may receive at least four years of support if they had already received a year of assistantship during the MA, although assistantships for MA students are exceptional rather than customary.

*Current Students interested in receiving any kind of assistantship must fill out an application for a department assistantship with the ITS Graduate Coordinator, Brenda Weiss, by January 15 each year.*

Because of the quality and range of skills among our graduate students, an increasing number, after they finish course work, have received TA positions in departments other than Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies. We encourage qualified students to explore these options; however, it is important for graduate students receiving a PhD in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies to teach courses related to our program (if an assignment is available to them) for at least one year during their years of coursework in order to obtain teaching experience specifically in theatre studies. It is our policy that any TA/PA/RA support from other departments counts towards the three or more years of support we hope to provide students while they are doing their coursework.

### **Readerships**

In addition to the longer-term support outlined above, the program offers more modest support in the form of scholarships and/or readerships. Readers are hired on an hourly basis to assist faculty members in grading papers for large lecture courses with 40-60 students. These are ad hoc appointments.

## The MA Program

The Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies can serve as the preparatory degree for the PhD, or as a terminal degree for students seeking greater exposure to theatre, drama and performance studies beyond the undergraduate degree.

### MA Requirements (30 Credits, 24 minimum in ITS Courses)

- **Proseminar in Theatre Research (ENGL 850)** All students must take this course in the fall semester of their first year as part of their 30 credits.
- **Significant participation in an approved theatre production or performance event** as dramaturg, director, assistant director, stage manager, assistant stage manager, actor, designer, or technician.
- **Thesis.** A candidate for the MA degree must choose an advisor from the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies faculty before the end of the second semester of study, and prepare a thesis under his/her guidance. Before the degree can be conferred, the thesis must be approved by a committee consisting of three faculty members--the advisor, at least one more faculty member from Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies, and one other member--and filed in Memorial Library according to Graduate School deadlines. The thesis should represent independent research carried out by the student in consultation with the thesis committee. Students enroll in 5-8 credit hours for completing their thesis.
- **A one-hour oral defense of the thesis.** At the defense, the student explains the contribution of the thesis to the field of study, and responds to questions and critiques by the committee. Completion of the MA requires successful completion of the thesis and a satisfactory defense of it.

### MA Program Timeline

The MA program is designed to be completed in 3-4 semesters of full-time study.

#### MA Program: 1st Year

During Welcome Week of the fall semester, all students receive the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies MA and PhD Handbook which contains current policies about program requirements and progress. They register for the ITS Proseminar and are advised by Program Director about other appropriate courses. Because MA students must choose an advisor by the end of their second semester, they are encouraged to take courses with various members of the program faculty during the first year of study. All first-year MA students are assessed informally during the Spring semester of the first year. Students who are struggling with coursework or research writing must meet with the Program Director and their advisor to discuss fall courses and strategies for improvement.

#### MA Program: 2nd Year

Second year students continue completing course requirements, with an emphasis on the production requirement, and begin work on a thesis proposal in consultation with their advisor. After the advisor has approved the thesis proposal, the student selects a thesis committee consisting of the advisor and two other faculty members, including at least one other member from the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program. Students petition for a thesis defense by writing to the Program Director, and schedule a date in coordination with their thesis committee and the Graduate Coordinator.

### **The Thesis**

The MA thesis is a scholarly contribution to knowledge that attests to the student's ability to define, research, and articulate in writing a topic related to the field of Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies. Topics should be discussed with the advisor, and may focus on any aspect of theatre, drama and performance studies, depending on the students' interests. Students who plan to petition for admission to the PhD program may choose a topic related to their possible area of focus in the PhD program. The MA thesis is typically 75-90 double-spaced pages in length, including the bibliography. MA students in Theatre for Youth who are not planning to apply for the PhD program may do an alternative thesis project in consultation with the Director of the Theatre for Youth program. *Students must distribute the thesis to committee members two weeks prior to the defense, by sending a copy of the thesis to the graduate coordinator.*

### **Choosing an MA Advisor**

The Graduate School requires every graduate student to have an academic advisor. The advisor is the primary contact person within the department, and the faculty member who will guide the student most closely through his/her degree program. MA students work with the Program Director during their first semester in the program. In addition to meeting with the Director to plan the Fall course schedule, students begin to discuss possibilities for a permanent advisor.

The Director and the Graduate Coordinator continue to serve as the liaison between the Graduate School and graduate students, working closely with the student's advisor on such issues as graduation requirements. Students are responsible, however, for making sure they are on track, meeting deadlines, and filling out appropriate applications. Students are expected, however, to stay informed about both Graduate School and departmental requirements.

### **MA with Specialization in Theatre for Youth**

Candidates for the MA degree with a specialization in Theatre for Youth will be advised by the Director of the Theatre for Youth Program and must take at least 12 credits in Theatre for Youth. They will gear their thesis to any aspect of the field of theatre for youth in consultation with their advisor. The thesis should be a product of the student's independent research, carried out in consultation with the Advisor and other faculty members with expertise in the field.

### **Admission/Continuation into the PhD program**

*MA students who plan to continue into the PhD program must petition the Program Director to request admission to the PhD program by Welcome Week of their final semester.* To be considered for admission and funding, students should ideally plan to defend their thesis by *30 March*; if the defense is scheduled for a later date, both admission and funding will be conditional on the satisfactory completion, approval, and final submission of the thesis. Students who defend in the fall semester and are admitted to the PhD program may enter the program in the spring semester, but funding for that semester would be unusual. In such cases enrollment in the PhD program may be deferred to the fall semester of the following academic year. Admission to the PhD program is **not** automatic or guaranteed; it depends, among other factors, on a successful thesis defense and the recommendation of ITS faculty.

## The PhD Program

The PhD program in Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison prepares students to assume professional positions as scholars, educators, and researchers in theatre and performance studies. The degree requirements are designed to balance theoretical investigations with practical applications, and to allow for interdisciplinary studies that enhance the value and possibilities of the degree. Students are encouraged to participate in national and international professional meetings, and to publish in the field.

### PhD Program Timeline

PhD coursework is usually completed within six semesters. Most students complete their dissertations four to six semesters after finishing their coursework. The number of MA credits transferred, the time taken to complete the language requirements, and other factors can affect this timeline.

### Coursework: 69 Credits, or 23 Courses

Courses numbered 300 and above count toward a graduate degree. Courses numbered from 301-699 carry both undergraduate and graduate credit, but the course must provide a separate syllabus for graduate students. Courses numbered from 700-800 carry graduate credit only. Seminars are numbered 900 and above.

- 8 courses in dramatic literature, history, and theory and criticism, including one required course (Proseminar in Theatre Research) taken in the fall semester of the first year.
- 3 practicum courses (courses that engage directly with the practice of theatre and performance).
- 8 courses grouped to provide an area of specialization within the major field of study.
- 4 courses in fields other than Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies, grouped to complement the area of specialization and the major. Students, in consultation with their advisor, might choose a PhD minor supervised by another department or program, or they might select to complete a distributed minor.
- 3 seminars in the field of Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies, either taught by ITS faculty or designated as appropriate for the major by the ITS Program.

Over the course of the PhD program, students must acquire comprehensive knowledge of the field by taking at least two courses at the 500-level or above in each of the following areas of theatre research: dramatic literature, theatre history, and theatre and performance theory. Students must work with their advisors to ensure that both depth and breadth are achieved through the balance of courses and the final papers written for the courses. No more than two courses (out of the total of six) taken in other departments may count towards satisfying this requirement, and would need to be approved by the student's advisor. Upper-level courses taken at another university or independent study courses do not count towards satisfying this requirement.

Up to two independent study research courses may be taken with individual faculty members during the PhD coursework. No more than one independent study may be taken with any one faculty member, either within or outside the ITS faculty and staff. A student who wishes to request an exception due to special circumstances must apply to the ITS Program for a waiver of this policy.

### **Area of Specialization**

In selecting their coursework, students develop an area of specialization, based on the focus of their scholarly work. The area of specialization may be defined by a genre, a theoretical approach or methodology, a time period and/or a geographical or linguistic area. It should be focused, yet broad enough for students to take eight courses relevant to it. At least four of the eight courses in the area of specialization must be taken in the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program (the usual number is six). Generally, students define an area of specialization only when they are near the completion of course work, and it is possible to reorganize the checklist at that time to reflect the emerging area of specialization.

### **The Minor**

Students must include a Minor consisting of 4 courses (12 hours) from outside the field of ITS as part of their coursework. The courses can be taken in a single outside department (a Focused Minor), or distributed over two or more departments (a Distributed Minor). An outside department minor requires the approval of the department housing it. A distributed minor requires approval by the student's advisor.

### **Portfolio Revision Credit**

In their final semester of course work, students may enroll in a directed study (English 999) for 1-3 credits and use that time to revise their portfolio papers for the Preliminary A Exam (described below). This final semester course for portfolio revisions does not count as toward a student's course requirements.

### **Second Language Requirement**

Even if a student's primary research can be conducted in English, all PhD candidates must have proficiency in a language other than English that will allow for research on primary and secondary sources relating to the chosen topic. The specific language should be decided in consultation with the student's advisor. Students whose first language is not English and who plan to use their native language in their research must consult with their advisor about using it to satisfy the language requirement.

In order to satisfy the language requirement for the PhD, students in the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program must EITHER

1. Receive at least a grade of B in an appropriate language course during their graduate study at UW-Madison OR
2. Pass the language exam administered by the department teaching that language on campus.

It may be possible to substitute the study of American Sign Language or a computer language to satisfy this requirement. A student requesting this substitution should submit a letter to the Program Director explaining the need to do so, and the plan for achieving computer language or American Sign Language competency.

While the study of music notation or dance notation may be necessary for some students' research and the acquisition of those skills would be expected, they will not count toward satisfying the foreign language requirement.

### **Practicum Requirements**

PhD students are required to take three practicum courses. A practicum course is defined as a course that incorporates practice into its curriculum. Recommended courses for the fulfillment of this requirement include Drama in Education, Applied Theatre or Dramaturgy. In lieu of one of their three required practicum courses, students can instead participate in three approved production activities as dramaturgs, assistant directors, performers, designers or technicians. These production activities may be with UW's University Theatre or with another group. Production activities outside of University Theatre must be approved ahead of time by the student's advisor and the Program Director.

### **Comprehensive Exams**

After the final semester of coursework, and after fulfilling the language and practicum requirements, all PhD students need to pass the comprehensive Prelim A Exam to be advanced to Dissertator status. A portfolio of three research papers (discussed at length below) must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator for distribution to exam jurors at least two weeks prior to the exam, which involves an oral defense of approximately 90-120 minutes.

The Prelim B Exam is a 1-hour oral defense of the dissertation proposal conducted by the candidate's dissertation committee. This exam is typically taken one semester after passing the Prelim A exam, and must be taken before the end of the second semester after the Prelim A.

### **The Dissertation**

The culminating project of the PhD degree, the dissertation is an original and substantial contribution to knowledge that establishes the student as a scholar and professional in the field of theatre studies. The PhD degree is awarded after a successful 2- hour defense of the thesis before the candidate's thesis committee.

### **PhD with Specialization in Theatre for Youth**

Qualified students may pursue a PhD degree in Theatre for Youth. In addition to developing special interests in K-12 Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies education and production, students are expected to develop a thorough background in traditional theatre (i.e. world drama, history, criticism, and production) and are encouraged to take relevant courses in other departments such as Curriculum and Instruction, Sociology, Psychology, and English.

PhD students in Theatre for Youth are advised by the Director of the Theatre for Youth Program, and take the TFY courses offered by the department in the course of their studies. They will gear their dissertation to any aspect of the field of Theatre for Youth in consultation with their advisor. In addition, at least one of their three Prelim A papers should discuss an aspect of theatre and drama for youth.

When funding allows, doctoral students who specialize in Theatre for Youth are given priority for teaching assistantships for T&D/C&I/Slavic 362, Drama in Education.

**PhD Program: 1<sup>st</sup> Year**

During Welcome Week of the fall semester, all students receive the MA and PhD Handbook which contains current policies about program requirements and progress. Students enroll in the Proseminar in Theatre Research (unless already taken for the MA) and are advised by the Program Director to take as many Theatre Research classes as is feasible during the first year. Incoming students are encouraged to look at the online timetable and have a proposed schedule of classes in mind before meeting with the Director. Students holding Teaching Assistantships may wish to register for only three courses, while non-TAs (including Fellowship students) may take four courses per semester.

All new PhD students should meet with their advisor early during the fall semester to discuss transfer credits. For MA students continuing into the PhD, 24 credits may be transferred; for new PhD students, up to 18 credits are allowed.

All first year PhD students are assessed formally at the end of the spring semester, and receive a written progress report.

**PhD Program: 2nd Year**

Students continue taking mainly Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies courses, but are also advised to begin fulfilling other requirements (e.g. practicum courses, courses for the Minor, courses relating to their areas of interest taught in other departments, language courses). *Students must select an advisor by the end of their third semester on campus*, and meet with him/her to discuss the process of writing and revising portfolio papers for the Prelim A exam. All portfolio papers must be written during the period of coursework for the PhD program.

Second-year students are assessed formally in late spring by all members of the ITS faculty. The second-year assessment letter from is based on written comments from the advisor and the program faculty as a whole, and documents that the student is either (1) proceeding as expected; or (2) deficient in some areas (research skills, writing, conceptualization, etc.); or (3) not making expected progress and likely to be placed on probation.

**PhD Program: 3rd Year**

During the third year advising will focus on completing requirements on the basis of the PhD checklist. Special attention will be given to language requirements, seminars, practicum courses, production experiences (if applicable), the PhD Minor, the area of specialization, and Prelim A portfolio papers. Once requirements are completed, students may petition the Program Director for permission to take the Prelim A Exam during Finals Week or the next available Welcome Week. During the intervening time students work on revisions to the portfolio papers, and may receive up to 3 credits for doing so by enrolling in directed study credits.

**Choosing a PhD Advisor**

The Graduate School requires every graduate student to have an academic advisor. The advisor is the primary contact person within the department, and the faculty member who will guide a student most closely through his/her degree program.

The Program Director serves as the advisor for PhD students during the student's first three semesters or until they select an advisor from among the ITS faculty.

The choice of an advisor is an important one, and students should reflect on the best fit with their own scholarly pursuits. They are encouraged to decide on a permanent advisor by the beginning of their third semester, and are *required* to do so by the end of that semester. After a student has chosen an advisor, he/she should write a memo to that faculty member confirming the agreement, with copies to the Program Director and the Graduate Coordinator (this second copy will be added to their permanent file). Students who graduated from the MA to the PhD program within the department may change their advisor for doctoral work. Students who wish to change their advisor after the Prelim exams may also do so after appropriate consultation with the current and future advisors.

The Program Director and the Graduate Coordinator continue to serve as the links between the Graduate School and graduate students, working closely with each student's advisor on such issues as fellowship competitions, graduation requirements, transfer credits, residency requirements, and the language requirement. *However, students are responsible for making sure they are on track, meeting deadlines, and filling out appropriate applications.*

## **Advancement to Dissertator Status**

### **The Preliminary A (Prelim A) Exam**

Upon the completion of coursework and the language and practicum requirements, PhD students petition the Program Director to schedule their comprehensive Prelim A Exam, which advances them to dissertator status. For this exam students prepare a portfolio of three research papers. Portfolio papers must be written and revised during doctoral coursework, and must be based on work done in advanced graduate courses (500-level and above) that have been taught by Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies faculty, or by faculty formally affiliated with the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies Program. They should be works of substantial scholarship dealing respectively with topics in theatre theory, theatre history, and dramatic literature. Each paper must demonstrate the candidate's ability to define a viable area of inquiry, use appropriate research methods and materials, and present a clear and cogent scholarly argument. Papers must also conform fully to acceptable professional standards of research writing and documentation. *Each paper is required to be 20-25 double-spaced pages (6000-7500 words) in length, excluding the endnotes and bibliography, and must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator for distribution to the ITS faculty two weeks prior to the exam.*

The Prelim A is an approximately 90-120 minute oral exam conducted by ITS faculty. It is usually scheduled during Welcome Week of the semester following the completion of course work and language requirements for the doctoral degree, and formally admits a student to PhD Dissertator status.

### **The Prelim A Portfolio: Expectations and Guidelines**

Preparation of the Prelim A portfolio is an essential and important part of a student's progress towards the PhD degree. While deciding on a plan of study in consultation with the Program Director and/or their advisor, students should identify the courses in which they are likely to develop potential Prelim A papers, and inform the course instructors of their decision early in the semester. Each instructor will provide appropriate guidance and feedback during the semester that the student can use to develop a successful portfolio paper, and have an additional meeting with the student early during the next semester for a fuller discussion of

revision strategies. The advisor may also provide general guidance on the selection of papers at the beginning of the revision process. *However, ITS faculty do not read or comment on papers while they are being revised for inclusion in the portfolio, and the responsibility for creating and developing the final portfolio rests with the student.*

Portfolio papers should be distinguished carefully from term papers submitted as final projects in graduate-level courses. While a final paper may be satisfactory and even evaluated as excellent in the context of a specific class, the student must plan the changes that will develop it into an acceptable portfolio paper. Revisions, therefore, are conducted outside the regular course of advising, and become the sole responsibility of the student. Portfolio papers do not need to identify the original courses for which they were written. PhD students in the Theatre for Youth program should submit at least one portfolio paper (history, theory, or dramatic criticism) dealing with an aspect of Theatre for Youth, ideally one written for a class in TFY (500-level or above).

In their final semester of coursework, students may enroll in ENGL 999 (Directed Study) for 1-3 credits, and use that time for revising the portfolio papers; they are also encouraged to take advantage of study circles, support groups, the University Writing Center, and other resources on campus). *Portfolio papers cannot be written during the semester of the Prelim A Exam.* Students who write a portfolio paper in their last semester of course work should schedule their Prelim A during Welcome Week of the Fall or Spring semesters (August or January). The lead advisor is the administrative faculty of record for the course, but students complete revisions on their own.

Revisions may include, but are not limited to, expanding upon the topic, responding to faculty comments received during the class for which the paper was written, deepening the research by consulting additional sources, and refining the methodology. A student may add substantially to an earlier, shorter paper (one which is less than 6000 words) in order to submit it as a portfolio paper. An exemplary Prelim A paper is one that is potentially publishable in a scholarly theatre journal.

### **Descriptions of Portfolio Papers**

**Theatre History** portfolio papers analyze performance elements, events, texts, trends, and traditions in the context of their own, particular historical moments. *They are informed interpretations of the theatrical past that focus on performances, productions, and the institutions from which they emerged.* Many methods are acceptable, from empirical studies to revisionist readings. Papers might focus on such subjects as individuals or groups involved in the performance (actors, directors, designers, producers, audiences); techniques of directing, acting, or design; the economics of theatre production; performance histories; or government regulations. They might take on such matters as the cultural or ideological traditions on which a performance was built, the material conditions of the performance event, the socio-political contexts of the performance, or the implications for future theatrical practice of performance during a particular historical period. A theatre history paper does not always require the writer to perform original archival work, but it must be informed by historical documentation, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the historical contexts of the subject.

**Dramatic Literature** portfolio papers focus substantially on plays as verbal constructs emerging from particular aesthetic, cultural, political, and theatrical conditions. The focus is typically on an interconnected cluster of texts which may well belong to different times, cultures or styles; dealing with a single play is much less common. *These portfolio papers deal in historically and contextually informed ways with questions of form, mode, genre, style, influence, language, characterization, meaning, and affect.* Papers might also take up a widely held reading, context, or perspective and then discuss how plays in production may challenge and/or validate the dominant ideology. While the paper must offer an original thesis, it must also engage the extant criticism on its subject.

**Theatre and Performance Theory** portfolio papers must hinge on theory--texts that posit a philosophy, paradigm, or insight for performance. This may be theatre theory *per se*, such as writings on the theatre by Bertolt Brecht, Gertrude Stein, or Zeami; theory may also mean works of critical and cultural theory from other disciplines, such as literary studies, developing new conceptual argument about theatre or performance in light of existing theories, ideally engaging with those theories to reinterpret or recombine them. The formulaic application of theoretical structures to simple dramatic examples is not appropriate for a portfolio theory paper. *Rather, portfolio theory papers build arguments using high-level concepts in a manner both clear and sophisticated.*

### **The Prelim A Exam Defense**

A student approaching the end of course-work for the PhD should petition the Program Director to schedule the Prelim A exam, and be admitted to Dissertator status after the successful completion of the exam. The Prelim A Exam is normally scheduled either at the beginning of the semester, during Welcome Week, or at the end of the semester, during Study and Exam Week. *Papers must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator for circulation to the ITS faculty at least two weeks prior to the exam date.*

At the beginning of the exam the student has an opportunity to contextualize and comment briefly on the selection of papers in whatever way he/she considers appropriate (5-8 minutes). In conducting the exam, the ITS faculty consider the portfolio as a measure both of the student's research accomplishments at the end of the period of coursework, and his/her preparedness to undertake advanced research in the fields of drama and theatre and to revise work according to accepted scholarly standards. The student is evaluated on both the revised portfolio papers and the oral defense. The oral exam lasts approximately 90 to 120 minutes

A student whose portfolio is satisfactory and who passes the oral Prelim A exam will advance immediately to Dissertator status and begin writing the dissertation proposal. A student whose portfolio is unsatisfactory and/or who does not pass the oral defense will have an advisory meeting with Theatre Research faculty immediately following the defense, during which faculty members will provide specific feedback and suggestions for further revision. The student will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit one or more papers later in the semester or at the beginning of the next semester. When the papers are resubmitted, another defense will be scheduled. A student who does not pass the Prelim A exam on the second attempt must leave the PhD program.

### **Dissertator Status**

Dissertator (or “ABD” status) is achieved when a student meets all the requirements on the PhD checklist and has passed the Prelim A exam. Dissertator status comes with a raise in pay for those students who have an assistantship, or a lower dissertation tuition rate. These benefits take effect in the semester immediately following the fulfillment of all requirements. If the exam is taken during Welcome Week of the fall or spring semester and a student is granted dissertator status, the benefits take effect immediately. Dissertators register for a maximum of three credits each semester, usually for 990: Thesis/Dissertation Research. A dissertator registered for three credits of graduate-level coursework is considered a full-time student, although in some departments a student must take 6 credits to hold a TA appointment.

### **The Dissertation Committee**

The dissertation committee consists four or more members, including the Dissertation Advisor and at least two other current graduate faculty members from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. At least one member must represent an outside field. The dissertation advisor must be a faculty member with a teaching appointment in the ITS Program. A committee may have two co-advisors, but at least one of the co-advisors must have a teaching appointment within ITS. At least three committee members must serve as readers, responsible for reading the entire dissertation closely. In some circumstances, a dissertation committee might include a member who is not expected to assess the dissertation with the same degree of engagement as a reader. With the approval of the Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies faculty, one Academic Staff member may also serve on a dissertation committee. The committee is formed by the dissertator in consultation with the advisor, and the dissertator is responsible for obtaining written agreement from the committee members to serve on the dissertation committee.

### **Preliminary B (Prelim B) Exam**

Once the Prelim A exam is completed and a student has obtained Dissertator status, he or she begins writing a dissertation proposal. Dissertators work closely with their advisor to plan a mutually feasible schedule for writing and defending the dissertation proposal. This defense should take place no later than 6 months after passing the Prelim A Exam (excluding the summer and winter breaks). Students must circulate the proposal to their dissertation committee at least two weeks before the scheduled Prelim B exam, and defend it in a 1-hour oral exam. The Prelim B Exam is typically scheduled during Finals Week of the semester in which the student has achieved Dissertator status, or during Welcome Week of the next semester.

### **The Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal is prepared under the guidance of the student’s dissertation advisor. The proposal may vary from 20-25 pages depending on the candidate’s topic, and should be accompanied by a substantial *bibliography* of 3-5 pages and a one-page *abstract* that summarizes the project. The proposal should be a focused and coherent document that clearly identifies and conceptualizes the subject of the dissertation, its relation to existing scholarship, its principal research methodology, and its contribution to the scholarly field. It should also include at least a brief outline and description of the various chapters. The bibliography need not be exhaustive, but must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the major primary and secondary sources relevant to the topic.

### **The Prelim B Exam Defense**

The proposal defense most often takes the form of a conversation during which the candidate

introduces and contextualizes the proposal, followed by comments and questions from the committee. The purpose is to assist the candidate in defining and refining his or her dissertation project. The committee may help the candidate identify relevant textual and contextual materials for the study, ask for clarifications of methodology and conceptual framework, and discuss the scope and breadth of the study.

The dissertation proposal may be approved at the Prelim B Exam with no revisions, or with suggestions for revision that are provided to the candidate in writing. It may also be rejected in its existing form, with recommendations for substantial revision. If the proposal is accepted with no revisions, it will be added to the student's file and the PhD checklist will be signed. If the proposal is accepted with revisions, the revisions should be completed within three months of the Prelim B Exam, and should be reviewed either by the Dissertation Advisor or by the full committee before the proposal is filed and recorded and the checklist is signed. If the proposal is rejected, a new Prelim B will be scheduled within a period of time to be decided by the committee. Prelim B exams cannot be taken more than twice.

Once the Dissertator has passed the Prelim B, he or she begins writing the dissertation under the guidance of the Dissertation Advisor and with varying degrees of input from the entire committee. The dissertation committee's endorsement of the proposal indicates the committee members' willingness to work with the dissertator on that project. Although the project is likely to change in the process of research and writing, it should bear a clear, recognizable relationship to the accepted proposal. If the committee changes, new members should receive an accepted proposal and must agree in writing that they are willing to work with the Dissertator on the dissertation. If the dissertation changes to the extent that it has no recognizable connection to the accepted proposal, a new proposal must be submitted to the dissertation committee, and may result in a second Prelim B defense.

## **Dissertation Completion Guidelines**

### **The Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation defense must be scheduled during or before Finals Week of a semester in which the student is enrolled as a Dissertator. Dissertators should notify the Program Director and the Graduate Coordinator of their intention to defend at least one month in advance so that the necessary paperwork can be prepared. Students must submit their dissertation to committee members *at least three weeks before the defense date*. The student is responsible for providing a hard copy of the dissertation to any committee member who requests it.

The defense usually lasts about two hours. It assesses the dissertation with regard to its completeness, coherence, and contribution to the field. The dissertation may be accepted without revisions, accepted with minor revisions, accepted with major revisions, or rejected altogether. Most dissertations are accepted with either minor or major revisions. If committee members recommend that the dissertation can be deposited with minor or no substantial revisions, they will sign the "PhD Warrant" and the "Committee Page" form. Revisions have to be completed before the dissertation can be deposited. In the rare instance that a dissertation is rejected, a new defense will need to be scheduled within a time period stipulated by the committee.

In exceptional cases (such as when a student accepts employment away from the University), the dissertation defense may be held as an "in progress" defense if approximately three-fourths of the dissertation is complete *and if the Advisor approves*. The idea of an "in progress" defense is based on the assumption that significant work will be done to revise the material that has been discussed, and also that the remaining work will be shaped by the discussion at the defense. A student must request permission from the Advisor to schedule an "in progress" defense, who will determine in consultation with the thesis committee whether an in progress defense is feasible.

### **Depositing the Dissertation**

All dissertations that have successfully been defended must be deposited with the university. Before the dissertation can be deposited with the Graduate School, the student needs to arrange with the Graduate Coordinator to obtain the necessary forms: the "PhD Warrant" and the "Committee Page." These pages are usually, but not always, signed by the committee members at the oral dissertation defense. The signed documents stay on file with the Graduate Coordinator until the Dissertation Advisor clears the dissertation for deposit and guidelines regarding deadlines, defending, and depositing your dissertation can be found at the following link: <http://www.grad.wisc.edu/education/completedegree/pguide.html>

### **Degree Deadline**

The Graduate School requires Dissertators to complete the dissertation within five (5) years of having reached Dissertator status, and to complete and deposit the dissertation within one (1) year of the oral Dissertation Defense. It may be possible to get an extension on the five-year rule for completion of the dissertation. Petitions for an extension need to be made to the Graduate School and are subject to current policies. Please consult with the Graduate Coordinator and the Program Director for further information.

## MA Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Entered Graduate work at UW \_\_\_\_\_

TA/PA/RA from Dept.	Position	Date
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Coursework

Courses:  
30 Credits Total;  
(24 min., includes  
5-8 thesis credits)

Number	Date	Title
850 _____	_____	Prosem. In Theatre Rsch__
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
990 _____	_____	Thesis (number of credits = ___)
990 _____	_____	Thesis (number of credits = ___)

### Production Requirement

Function/Show \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### MA Thesis

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

### Committee

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Final Oral Examination on Thesis

Date of Defense \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

### PhD Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date entered graduate work at UW \_\_\_\_\_

Date entered PhD program at UW \_\_\_\_\_

TA/PA/RA from Dept. Position \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I. Completion of Coursework \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

II. Verification from outside minor dept. \_\_\_\_\_

III. Language Requirement Exam or Course Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date passed \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Production Requirement Production \_\_\_\_\_ Function \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

V. Preliminary Examination A \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

VI. Preliminary Examination B \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee (Name/Department) \_\_\_\_\_ (Advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

VII. Final Oral Examination on Dissertation

Date of Defense \_\_\_\_\_ In Progress/Final

Date of Completion \_\_\_\_\_

## PhD Course Checklist

Deficiencies	Removed	Date
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Transfer Credits Title	Course No.	Approved By	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

General Courses	Number	Date	Title	L/H/T/S
(8 courses including Intro to Theatre Research)	_850_	_____	Proseminar in Theatre Research	_N/A_
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Specialization Area	Number	Date	Title	L/H/T/S
(8 courses)	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Specialization Description \_\_\_\_\_

Theatre Practice	Number	Date	Title	L/H/T/S
(3 courses)	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Minor	Number	Date	Title	L/H/T/S
(4 courses)	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

During PhD study, students must take 3 seminars (S); and 2 Literature (L), 2 History (H), and 2 Theory (T) courses, 500-level and above. Seminars can also count toward the required literature, history and theory courses.