

THEA 457 Honors Thesis in Theater **Bates Theater Thesis Guidelines**

FROM THE BATES WEBSITE:

The traditional senior thesis involves one or two semesters of original research and writing, culminating in a substantial paper on a research topic of the student's design. *Such an effort requires that the student possess an excellent understanding of the subject area, its theoretical underpinnings, and its research methodology.* The student must also be able to think critically and comprehensively about the topic, and must be able to advance a well-formulated argument. Conducting a senior thesis not only draws on a student's past academic experience, it also requires considerable independent thinking and creativity, self-discipline, and effective time management.
<http://www.bates.edu/academics/programs-resources/senior-thesis/>

HONORS THESIS:

The following links should be consulted by students who have been approved by the Department to pursue an Honors Thesis:

<https://www.bates.edu/honors/>

<https://www.bates.edu/theater/academic-program/honors-thesis/>

FROM THE BATES THEATER & DANCE WEBSITE:

Performance/Production/Playwriting Requirements

Thesis work in these areas is by invitation of the departmental faculty only. Meeting the following requirements doesn't guarantee invitation. They're the minimum expectations which must be fulfilled to be eligible for a thesis in these fields.

- **Acting Thesis Requirements**

Course work: THEA 261, THEA 263, THEA 362;

Production work: Two major roles in faculty-directed productions at Bates.

- **Design Thesis Requirements**

Course work: THEA 130 plus one additional course in design.

Production work: Major production responsibility for one faculty-directed production at Bates; stage management of one department production.

- **Directing Thesis Requirements**

Course work: THEA 261, THEA 370

Production work: One production directed at Bates for credit as a THEA 360 in Theater after successfully completing THEA 370; stage management of one department production.

- **Playwriting Thesis Requirements**

Course work: THEA 240, THEA 339. Additional work: One completed script.

Production work: stage manage or serve as dramaturge for one department production.

- **History, Literature, Criticism Requirements**

Course work: THEA 101, THEA 200, 2 additional courses in Dramatic Literature or Theory.

Production work: completion of production credits.

<https://www.bates.edu/theater/academic-program/thesis/>

Thesis Option 1: Theater Makers Project and Written Component

This creative project option allows students who are invited to work on a thesis in acting, directing, playwriting or design to complete a specific project designated by the department. For acting, the student will portray a designated role in a specific production. For directing, a student will direct a specific play. For playwriting, the student will write an original play and have a staged reading. For design, the student will accomplish the design for an appropriate project as discussed by the student and their advisor.

Supporting this creative project, the thesis also includes a substantive paper examining the theoretical basis, contextual implications, and the process and product of the creative research. The project process and written portion of the thesis represents the students' independent original research based in understanding of contemporary and/or historical theater practice, its theoretical underpinnings, its cultural context and its research methodology. Research is understood to have both a creative and scholarly component. Suggested lengths: 1.5 - 2 hours of production and a substantial piece of polished academic writing according to MLA and the thesis guidelines available through the [Writing at Bates website](#) and the [Thesis Writers' Guide](#). (W3)

THESIS OBJECTIVES:

- To deepen and specify a personal approach to creating theater.
- To apply practiced techniques and creative research to the process and production.
- To cultivate a professional, collaborative, and creative process.
- To analyze text and identify its structural components in order to make informed creative choices.
- To develop a professional approach to the production process.
- To reflect on the process and production experience and describe an artistic approach through academic writing.

PART I. STATEMENT OF INTENT & PROPOSAL

Statement of Intent: Prior to being invited by the department, students must submit their written statement of intent, including the preferred semester of their thesis work, by December 1st of their Junior year.

Directing and Design students must submit a 2-3 page proposal stating as clearly as possible:

1. the CENTRAL IDEA for your theatre project. What do you intend to direct or design and why do this now?
2. the tools you are using in your theater research and your approach to your rehearsal/creative time.
3. practical considerations such as cast size, production challenges, etc.
4. a projected timeline for the theater project including research, writing, (audition information) and rehearsal process work to the Advisor and Department Chair before the end of the previous semester
5. bibliography projecting the range of research into your project (suggested 5-10 titles).

PART II. THEATER PROJECT: During Fall and/or Winter of Senior Year you will complete a project in acting, designing, directing or playwriting; the parameters of which are developed in conversation with your adviser. This is the core content and experience of the thesis.

- Discussion of venue, format, and timeline of the project will be decided in collaboration with the advisor and the department.

PART III. WRITTEN PORTION OF THE THESIS:

The written component will comprise, *as appropriate*, most or all of the following:

- research placing the project in historical and theoretical context
- script analysis
- character analysis
- process analysis
- journal entries tracking the progress of the project and your own journey
- final conclusion

1. **Written Thesis:** Your written portion should be a fully developed academic explanation of how you addressed your objectives through the theater process and historical/critical research. It should be written for a reader who has not seen the project, so it should include detailed description where appropriate. It must also include a detailed description of your artistic methods including research into the sources of those methods, the application of those methods to your creative project, and an honest evaluation of the outcomes of those methods. It must demonstrate knowledge of the place of your work in the fields of acting, directing, playwriting or design as currently practiced.

The written portion should have the following components in MLA style:

- **Bates Thesis Title Page** http://libguides.bates.edu/thesis_writers
- **Thesis Abstract.** Submit a titled, one-paragraphed thesis abstract of 250 words or fewer.
- **Introduction.** State your objectives and briefly outline the historical/critical research that will help you achieve them.
- **Academic context.** A display of knowledge and understanding of the situation of your work with the field using standard academic writing practices to provide evidence.
 - Survey of relevant theatre literature. This section should explore how your objectives and methods relate to the field of theatre at large.
 - If your creative project/research is cross-disciplinary, this section should include discussions of relevant literature.
- **Methodology & Creative Process Reflection.** Discuss how you pursued your objectives and honestly self-evaluate your creative process. For example:
 - What did you do in the rehearsal process to create your project?
 - How did you spend your time in rehearsal, and how did this relate to your research questions?
 - How did you prepare for rehearsal, and how did this relate to your research questions including creative stimuli?
 - Critical evaluation of your theatre process, including collaborative aspects of the creative process and your product.
 - Outcome of your piece in terms of performance objectives and audience response (if applicable).

- What would you do differently if you could do it over again, and why?
- **Conclusion.** Your final reflection on your objectives and outcomes.
- **Bibliography.** of all works cited including videos and performances.
- **Appendices.** Supporting materials contributing to an understanding of your creative project. For example:
 - **Poster**
 - **Program**
 - **Photographs**
 - **Visual Research**
 - **Reviews**
 - **Samples of rehearsal/performance journals**
 - **Scored Script Analysis Sample**-scan at least one scene/portion from the theater piece and score using the appropriate tools such as -objective, obstacles, tactics, beats, notes, blocking, design considerations, applied methodology. (For Directing, Acting students)

Guidelines for Creative Thesis Assessment

The Bates College honors guidelines state that the thesis counts for 60% of the honors award, while the oral examination counts for 40%. Thus, the written portion of the honors thesis counts for 25% of 60%—i.e. 15% overall.

Guidelines for The Written Portion of Performance Theses

1. Every performance thesis (in acting, directing, design, dance, stage management, performance art) will have a written component.
2. The thesis project comprises the written portion and the performance.
3. The written component will comprise, as appropriate, some or all of the following: script analysis, character analysis, process analysis, journal entries tracking the progress of the project, research placing the project in historical and theoretical context.
4. For honors theses in acting, directing, and design one of the two semesters should be given over to script and character analysis.
5. For honors theses in design, the first semester should also include appropriate visual research and development, including sketches.
6. For honors theses, the written portion will count for 25% of the thesis project.
7. The Bates College honors guidelines state that the thesis counts for 60% of the honors award, while the oral examination counts for 40%. Thus, the written portion of the honors thesis counts for 25% of 60%—i.e. 15% overall.
8. The length of the written portion will vary, with 25 pages as a minimum.
9. For honors theses in which the performance is in the second semester, the writing completed in the first semester-together with second semester revisions and additions-is to be submitted in

time to be read by the members of the honors panel-i.e., about 10 days before the first performance.

10. For honors theses in which the performance is in the first semester, the written portion is to be submitted in the second semester by the deadline determined by the honors committee.

11. All production/performance theses will include a retrospective discussion of the project written after the production process has concluded.

Thesis/Honors Thesis-Directing Students

BUDGET-You are allotted a budget total of no more than **\$1,000** that must cover all expenses. **Performing rights/licensing and publicity which will be covered by the Department.**