



WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Theatre & Dance

Department of Theatre & Dance, College of Fine Arts & Communication

Program of Study

The Department of Theatre and Dance offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in theatre, including the BA in Theatre, the BFA in Musical Theatre, the MFA in Acting, the MFA in Directing, and the MFA in Design. The department also offers minors in Dance and in Theatre. The department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

The Bachelor of Arts in Theatre (BA) is a liberal arts degree with options in Acting, Directing, and Production/Design. The 120 semester hour (SH) BA in Theatre provides a well-rounded core of Theatre courses in acting, stagecraft, theatre history, dramatic literature, and theatre design and technology plus upper-level study in the option specialties. BA students also take a minor, General Education courses, and electives. No audition or interview is required for admittance to the program. The BA in Theatre is a GradTrac program.

The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre (BFA) degree is designed to prepare students for a professional career in musical theatre or admission into an advanced degree program. The BFA in Musical Theatre provides the student with rigorous specialized training in dance, acting, and voice. This 135 SH program requires proficiency assessment throughout the four years of study. Students must complete their General Education courses and 95 SH in Musical Theatre courses, but they do not take a minor. Students must complete a professional summer semester as part of their coursework requirements. Candidates for the BFA program are selected by annual auditions and interviews.

Performance and Production Opportunities

Western is highly regarded for its ambitious Theatre and Dance programs, offering a vast array of performance and production opportunities. **University Theatre** and **University Dance Theatre** produce six mainstage theatre productions and the Winter Faculty DanceWorks and Spring Gala Dance Concerts every season. Additional opportunities to perform and work behind the scenes designing, building, and crewing productions are available through the very active studio production season, which presents from 10 to 12 shows each year. There are also other performance opportunities in dance during the academic year.

Summer Music Theatre produces three musicals each summer with professional and student actors, designers, and directors. **The Regional Touring Theatre Company** creates original theatre productions and tours to public schools and libraries throughout the region in the fall and spring semesters.

Financial Assistance

The department offers scholarships and employment opportunities and also awards Talent Grants and Tuition Waivers to undergraduate students who participate in the Theatre and Dance programs. These grants/tuition waivers vary from \$300 to \$1,000 per semester. For **incoming students**, grants/tuition waivers are awarded on the basis of an audition or interview/portfolio review. Prospective students apply directly to the department.

Exciting Facts about Theatre and Dance at Western

- The curriculum offers multiple levels of acting, voice, movement, acting for the camera, costume, scenic and lighting design, theatre practice, and a three-part survey of World Theatre History.
- Dance courses are offered in ballet, jazz, tap, modern dance, composition, dance history, and improvisation.

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- There is a strong stage combat program at Western. Students can take numerous courses in combat and earn certification in armed and unarmed combat. We have one of the best theatre armories in the country!
- Bard in the Barn showcases “unrehearsed Shakespeare” performance techniques during Macomb’s Barnacopia Festival in the fall and at other events during the year.
- The department has gained national recognition for its students’ performances and presentations at the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival and the American College Dance Festival.
- Students in the Musical Theatre BFA receive singing training from teachers who are trained in both Classical and Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) vocal techniques, including specialists in belt voice and Somatic VoiceworkSM, the Lovetri Method.

Faculty

The Theatre and Dance faculty at Western are a very productive group of professionals—all highly qualified and passionate about theatre and the arts. All of the Theatre faculty hold advanced degrees in Theatre and are active in scholarly/creative activities in their areas of expertise. There are artist-teachers in all of the applied areas, with specialists in voice, movement/stage combat, acting, musical theatre, scenic design, lighting design, costume design, and directing.

- **Acting and Directing:** Carolyn Blackinton, eglā birmingham Hassan, Bill Kincaid, D.C. Wright
- **Dance:** Denise Brakefield, Heidi Clemmens, Candace Winters-March
- **Design and Production:** Ray Gabica, Tim Kupka, David E. Patrick, Bonnie Jacobs, Michael Klippert
- **Musical Theatre:** Matt Bean, Kitty Karn, Sharon Nott, Marcus Olson, Lynn Thompson
- **Theatre Studies:** Jason Conner, Dr. Al Goldfarb, Christiane Morel, Dr. Jeannie M. Woods



Facilities

The Theatre and Dance facilities include three theatres, well-appointed shops, acting studios, dance studios, and classrooms.

Hainline Theatre is a 387-seat proscenium theatre for mainstage and dance productions.

Horrabin Theatre is a 161-seat thrust stage for mainstage productions.

Simpkins Hall Theatre is a flexible space, which changes configuration every semester for studio productions.

Brophy Dance Studio is a spacious dance studio with a Rosco sprung floor and marly surface.

All of the theatres have up-to-date computerized lighting and sound equipment. The scene and costume shops are well-equipped and staffed by professional personnel. The Theatre and Dance department’s classrooms are located in Sallee and Simpkins Halls. The department has its own computer CAD lab.

Accomplished Alumni

The Department of Theatre and Dance has alumni who have won Joseph Jefferson Awards for acting and design in Chicago and Emmy Awards for their work in television. Former Western students have appeared in Broadway and Off-Broadway productions, major motion pictures, television series, commercials, outdoor dramas, and regional theatre. Former Western Theatre students have designed sets for local, regional, and network television shows; and they work as technical directors, designers, dressers, technicians, and stage managers around the world. Dance students have worked professionally for the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble, Alabama Contemporary Dance, Philadanco, and the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company. Corporations that have hired Western students include Paramount Pictures; Walt Disney Productions; the Goodman and Steppenwolf Theatres in Chicago; the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; the Folger Theatre in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC; the Public Theater in New York; the Alabama, Wisconsin, and Georgia Shakespeare Festivals; Spielberg Productions; and NBC, Nickelodeon, CBS, Showtime, HBO, PBS, WGN, and ABC television networks.

As a student, I had the opportunity to participate in 30 or more plays, which gave me the experience necessary to face a live audience.

–Michael Boatman, BA, 1985, *Spin City* and *Arli\$\$* star

Meet Our Students

If you would like to contact a student in our program to learn more about theatre and dance at Western, check out our website at the address below.

wiu.edu/theatre

Department of Theatre & Dance

Browne Hall 101 • Western Illinois University
1 University Circle • Macomb, IL 61455-1390
Phone: (309) 298-1543



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