

Theatre & Dance

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



Program of Study

The WIU Department of Theatre and Dance offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in theatre, including a Bachelor of Arts in theatre, Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theatre, Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in acting, MFA in directing and 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 (NAST).

The Bachelor of Arts in Theatre is a liberal arts degree with options in performance 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, as well as 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 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 138 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 a minor is not required. 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 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 10-12 shows each year. There are also other performance opportunities in dance during the academic year.

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, improvisation and musical theatre dance.
- 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.
- BYOP (Bring Your Own Play), Western's own ten-minute playwriting festival. Numerous BYOP playwrights have gone on to win national awards and international productions.
- 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 program 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. The BFA musical theatre degree program is one of Western's Signature Academic Programs.

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.

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, Bill Kincaid, D.C. Wright
- **Dance:** Heidi Clemmens, Lara Little
- **Design and Production:** Scot Bouillon, Dan Schmidt, Billy Clow, Jeannie Galieto, Steven House, Rebel Mickelson
- **Musical Theatre:** Matt Bean, Lysa Fox, Kitty Karn, Sharon Nott, Lynn Thompson
- **Theatre Studies:** Jason Conner, Adam Lewis, Jeannie M. Woods



Facilities

The theatre and dance facilities include three theatres, well-appointed shops, acting studios, dance studios and classrooms, including the following:

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 WIU Department of Theatre and Dance has alumni who have won Joseph Jefferson Awards for acting and design in Chicago, Kevin Kline Awards for acting in St. Louis 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, D.C.; 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.

Meet Our Students

If you would like to contact a student in our program to learn more about theatre and dance at Western, visit wiu.edu/theatre.

Campus Visits

Come spend a day with WIU Theatre and Dance! The best way to know if a school is right for you is to come check it out in person. We would love to arrange a "Day in the Life . . ." experience for you! You would observe and participate in classes; take a voice lesson; meet the chair; visit with faculty members; have lunch and visit with current students; go on tours of the campus, theatre spaces and the town and attend a rehearsal or performance. Contact us at Theatre@wiu.edu to reserve a day!

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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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