

DRAMATIC THEATER ARTS M.F.A.

MISSION. To train students for sustainable, inspired artistic careers.

VISION. A dynamic, artistic laboratory for theater practitioners to investigate dramatic hypotheses about the nature and application of art in our lives.

VALUES. Audacity. Agility. Agency.

OBJECTIVES. We believe that art is fundamental to the health of an individual and healthy individuals are fundamental to social, economic, and civic health. We believe that the future for our industry is in well-trained, holistic practitioners that challenge the primacy of the past and the assumptions of the present to imagine new ways forward. Our goal is to develop versatile, informed, flexible performers who form a creative community committed to the advancement of art in society. With that, the Dramatic Arts Program seeks to:

- train holistically with a prioritization on individuality, wellness, and agency in the care of body, mind, and character.
- develop kinesthetic, creative, and critical awareness.
- cultivate enterprising minds with the audacity and enthusiasm to generate new ways of thinking and doing.
- practice collaborative, ensemble-based models based on anti-racist principles.
- foster advocacy, leadership, and the desire to use talents in service of community.

CURRICULUM. D'Youville's Dramatic Arts Program is the first acting and performance MFA in Western New York. Our course of study prioritizes wellness and individual artistry in a robust, inquiry-driven curriculum that explores the integration of "internal" (or psychological) techniques and "external" (or physical) techniques, academically and artistically.

Each semester focuses on a value aligned skill that supports program learning objectives. Coursework explores, develops, and advances that skill as it relates to discipline specific content in each class. Practical studio training is supported by critical and theoretical study, which culminates in a Creative Thesis Project demonstrating artistically the mastery of critical and creative skills.

Semester One focuses on awareness. Awareness is fundamental to the work of an artist. This means awareness of yourself as a person and an artist: your own values, interests, strengths, and perception. This also means awareness of the circle around you: your ensemble, your colleagues, your community. The first semester is about cultivating awareness through observation, imagination, and reflection. Coursework in your first semester asks you to explore who you are as an artist, what story you want to tell, and who you want to tell them with (and to). With this knowledge, we begin to build an ensemble of self-aware individuals each bringing their own strength to the creative process.

Semester Two focuses on Articulation, the act of giving utterance or expression. It involves the way we move our body, the way we make sound, and the way we define our ideas. In the second semester, we build on awareness to explore how ideas are brought into a concrete form. With the knowledge we gained in the first semester of ourselves as artists, we

begin to deepen our practice for body, voice, and mind in order to safely, creatively, and flexibly engage with storytelling.

Semester Three focuses on Transformation. With the clarity we gained in semester one, and the agility we refined in semester two, we can now explore the limits of our imagination in semester three. The skill of transformation allows us to explore both texts and ourselves with curiosity to see how we can authentically mold new stories with bold choices. The bolder the choices, the greater the transformative power of artists and stories.

Semester Four focuses on Adaptation. Theater is an ephemeral field; each time you revisit a story it will be changed. By mastering awareness, articulation, and transformation, artists are able to adjust to the evolving landscape of theatrical storytelling. The most successful artists are those that can see the myriad opportunities that, once known and mastered, their craft can be applied to the world around them. To be an artist means to be the sole proprietor of the business of you. Having the ability to adapt to any given circumstance gives you the freedom to choose your path and, where no path exists, create one in your liking.

Learning Outcomes.

- a. Awareness of personal artistic values and the ability to both articulate and utilize a clear, cohesive, and intentional aesthetic in practice.
- b. Advanced knowledge of the performer's physical instrument (voice and body) and ability to safely use the expressive range of their individual artistic body in performance.
- c. Highly developed skill in contemporary and classic Western performance techniques as well as understanding and skill in global, non-Western techniques for storytelling.
- d. Ability to collaborate with diverse voices, perspectives, and stories
- e. Critical capacity and dramaturgical sensibility to apply historical, critical, and theoretical knowledge to the evaluation of dramatic works in text and performance
- f. Ability to employ safe and ethical practices for the creation of performance
- g. Agility in translating and adapting theatrical principles across sectors including education, health, and business
- h. Engaging with the civic responsibility of an artist through active participation in, and advancement of, the field of study and performing arts industry.
- i. Administration, management, and development of the performing arts as a field of study and the individual artist as proprietor of an artistic business.
- j. Ability to effectively communicate ideas, creative and critical, through a variety of media.

General Requirements. The MFA requires a minimum of sixty (60) credits earned over two (2) years. Unless otherwise specified, students move sequentially through the coursework with their cohort. Each semester, courses must be passed with a minimum of C+ to move on to the next course in the sequence.

MFA Performance Reviews. One major objective of the MFA is to prepare professionals for work in the theater. To achieve this objective, students and faculty review each student's progress toward professional development at the end of each semester. Prior to starting classes, students and faculty will create an educational development plan that outlines their goals, metrics for success, and milestones to be

achieved throughout their tenure at D'Youville. In addition to specific performance or craft-based goals, additional criteria may include quality of work, communication skills, professionalism, problem-solving abilities, cooperation, or other areas of personal and professional growth. At the end of each semester, students will review their development plan individually and write a self-evaluation of their progress. This report will be reviewed with faculty, who will provide written and oral feedback to the students based on the self-assessment. Both the self-assessment and the faculty feedback will be kept in the student's file. Following the performance review for that semester, students and faculty will adjust goals, tactics, or metrics for the subsequent semester as necessary. While not meeting stated goals is not necessarily grounds for probation or termination, failure to conduct the review will affect the student's ability to process through the program. Failure to complete in a semester will automatically place you on probation for the following semester. Students will have until the mid-term check in of the subsequent semester to complete and promise a self-evaluation to lift probation. If not completed, students will remain on probation for the remainder of the semester. If second consecutive self-evaluation is missed, this may result in termination from the program.

Auditions and Productions. Performance and production work are fundamental to the work of the program. To support this objective, students will perform in MFA productions throughout their tenure in the program. MFA productions are public performances with shows and roles chosen specifically for the educational value to each cohort. In addition to the MFA productions, students can perform in Kavinoky main stage shows. However, the program also places a great deal of importance on agency and artistic individuality in the work we do. With this in mind, students are expected to audition for professional opportunities as part of their training but will not be required to accept any role in a Kavinoky production or external professional theater if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

MFA Creative Thesis Project. The creative thesis gives the student an opportunity to demonstrate their best work on a significant and challenging project over an extended period. Creative thesis begins with the first semester of Drama Lab and culminates in the final semester course "Creative Thesis Project". The final product is the result of creative study, exploration, and creation, and therefore the form and content will vary based on each student. The essential parameters, however, are:

- An original work that is presented or performed before a public audience.
- An accompanying thesis paper documenting the process of creation. The paper should be a minimum of thirty-pages in length, typed, and include bibliographic information and supporting documentation. The paper may include a variety of supporting material, but at minimum must include exploration of:
 - The form of the project and how it corresponds to the content.
 - Research and development related to the content and show.
 - Production considerations regarding budget, venue, personnel, audience, etc.
 - Connection to identified audiences.
 - Assessment criteria and data related to the performance.
 - The works connection to the artists vision and intent for theater.
- A production book with all relevant documents, paperwork, and materials related to the execution of the performance.

Code	Title	Credits
MFA-511	Acting 1	3
MFA-512	Acting 2	3
MFA-521	Voice and Speech 1	2
MFA-522	Voice and Speech 2	2
MFA-531	Movement/Physical Awareness 1	2
MFA-532	Movement/Physical Awareness 2	2
MFA-541	Professional Seminar 1	3
MFA-542	Professional Seminar 2	3
MFA-551	Production 1	3
MFA-552	Production 2	3
MFA-561	Script Analysis	2
MFA-562	Dramaturgy	2
MFA-611	Acting 3	3
MFA-612	Acting 4	3
MFA-621	Voice and Speech 3	2
MFA-622	Voice and Speech 4	2
MFA-631	Movement/Physical Awareness 3	2
MFA-632	Movement/Physical Awareness 4	2
MFA-641	Professional Seminar 3	3
MFA-642	Professional Seminar 4	3
MFA-643	Professional Seminar 5	3
MFA-644	Professional Seminar 6	3
MFA-651	Production 3	3
MFA-652	Production 4	3
MFA-661	Colab Colloquial	2
MFA-662	History and Dramaturgy of Musical Theater	2
MFA-690	Production 5/Thesis Project	3
Total Credits		69

In addition to the general academic regulations, all matriculated students in the MFA program must fulfill the following requirements. The MFA program is a sequential curriculum with matriculation in technique courses contingent upon successful completion of the previous semester (this applies to Voice, Movement, and Acting courses). If student's do not achieve the requisite "C" in a technique course and are required to re-take, this may affect progress towards degree completion.

Continuation in the Dramatic Arts Program depends on consistent, demonstrable progress in completing requirements. Progress is evaluated through academic performance in coursework, professional performance in practical experiences, personal reflections, peer feedback, and faculty feedback. To remain in good standing, a student must:

- Maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA or above.
- Achieve a B or better in all required coursework.
 - Any student who earns a grade below that of a "C" in any required course must repeat the course and earn a grade of a "C" or above. Students may repeat the course one time. Students failing to earn a grade of "C" or above in a repeated course will be academically dismissed from the MFA.
- Attend all scheduled meetings and progress reviews, as well as auditions and callbacks for program related productions.
- Receive positive performance reviews from practical and production work.
- Submit Self Evaluation Reports at the end of each semester.

- Be making progress toward completion of all requirements including community service.
- Comply with all program and university policies.

Students who fail to meet these minimum standards will be prescribed an academic development plan for the subsequent semester. This plan will seek to address areas of concern through additional support, alternative coursework, training, or experiences. The academic development plan will outline a series of milestones to be met throughout the semester; the student's performance will be re-evaluated at the end of the term. Outcomes from that meeting could include return to good standing, extension of the academic development plan, creation of new academic development plan or, in extreme circumstances, dismissal from the program. The Academic Development Plan will be discussed with the student in person, and a written letter outlining the steps will be shared with the student and placed in their file.

Prospective students must complete a performance audition and the online university application and be accepted through D'Youville's Office of Admissions. Candidates must complete both the application and the audition to be considered for admission. If interested in the program, we recommend starting an online application early, before attending an audition.

Application requirements include:

- An undergraduate Baccalaureate degree with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Successful candidates have previous training in theater. This may include: a BA or BFA in Theater or other performing arts discipline; a minor in Theater or performing arts discipline; completion of a performing arts intensive, certification program, or internship; private lessons or additional training.
- An audition (see audition requirements below).

Optional items:

- Two (2) professional **letters of recommendation**.
- **Artist Portfolio** of your work. This could include:
 - documentation of performances (videos, still photos, sketches, renderings, prompt books).
 - Essays, articles, or papers about theater, performance, or art.
 - Interviews or news articles about you or your work.
 - Artist statements or philosophies or teaching statements or philosophies.
 - Film reels.
 - Testimonials.
 - Websites for artistic or professional work.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

All prospective students must complete an audition process that includes the presentation of their performance skills to a panel of adjudicators and a brief interview process. The audition requires:

- Two (2) pieces of text in contrasting styles. Each piece should be a maximum of two minutes each. Contrasting text could be:
 - A contemporary text (post 1980 prose) and a verse/classical text (Shakespeare, Moliere, poetry, etc.) OR
 - A comedic text and a dramatic text
- A typed **Statement of Intent** that answers the question: "What do you want the future of theater to look like?" Statement should be one to two pages, maximum.

- **Artist Resume** that includes previous or current training, performance or production experience, skills, and outside work experience.
- **Artist Headshot** A current photograph that is a minimum from the shoulders up and no more than from mid-torso up. Make sure you have enough light and avoid backgrounds that are too busy. You do not need to have professional headshots but please feel free to use if you have them.

For students interested in auditioning for the Dramatic Arts MFA, please email mallinsk@dyc.edu for information on upcoming auditions.

All admissions decisions are made consistent with the §52.2(d)(1) and (2) of the regulations of the Commissioner of Education