

DRAMA

Master of Arts in Drama Handbook

Revised August 2024



Program Coordinator: Dr. Selena Couture | couture2@ualberta.ca

Graduate Student Advisors: Dawn Hunter & Rebecca Anderson | dramags@ualberta.ca

Our Program

Our MA in Drama offers a strong foundation of historical and contemporary critical and theoretical approaches to theatre and performance. This unique performance studies approach relates performance to the broader field of cultural studies and encourages students to complement their research with an understanding of the complex dynamics of the creative process.

Table of Contents

- Address from the Chair** **3**
- Acknowledging Territory** **3**
- Program Overview** **4**
 - The Context 4
 - Introduction 4
 - Objectives 4
 - Funding 5
- The Program Requirements** **5**
 - Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement. 5
 - Independent Development Plan & Professional Development Requirement. 6
 - Thesis-Based MA 6
 - Course-Based MA 7
 - The Language Requirement. 7
 - The MA Thesis 8
- Timeline and Checklist** **10**
 - Year One. 10
 - Year Two 11
- Performance Opportunities** **12**
- Closing Remarks** **12**

Address from the Chair

Dear Students,

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Drama, I offer you a warm welcome to the department! You are each embarking on a new year full of anticipation and promise. Congratulations on making the choice to study here in the Department of Drama at the University of Alberta. Many have travelled this path before but none have been you in your present moment. You will bring new insight and lively interaction to our classrooms, studios, and creative atmosphere. You will engage in research and making in ways you have never dreamed. You will astound us and challenge yourself. I hope you have hours of enjoyment in pursuing your studies!

The most important element in the alchemy of a Drama Department is its community. Building a culture of care is a priority because we have hard work to do. We look to challenge norms, to ask questions that provoke thought and action, and to contemplate deeply the human condition today in our post-truth, eco-challenged, and tumultuous times. But first, we must build a community that is respectful and open-minded. As students, you are instrumental in building a community in which we can be our best selves and be our most responsive and creative. In every program, we are all students of Drama. We are one department and one university. You belong. Welcome!!!

April Viczko
Chair, Department of Drama
Professor, Theatre Design
e: aviczko@ualberta.ca

Acknowledging Territory

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

This statement is the [officially endorsed](#) U of A acknowledgement of Indigenous territory developed through the Provost Office in a broader consultation process with the Council on Aboriginal Initiatives, Town Halls and review by Indigenous faculty and staff.

In the Drama department, we are learning what it means to go beyond acknowledging territory to develop respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and lands. We hope you can contribute to this process in your graduate studies.

Program Overview

THE CONTEXT

The Department of Drama offers two MA Drama programs: thesis-based and course-based.

All MA students have one course (Drama 601) in common with their colleagues in the Ph.D. program and MFA Directing, Theatre Practice, and Voice Pedagogy programs, and they will also share other courses with graduate students enrolled in these programs. Many of our faculty and students have combined interest and expertise in both scholarly research and performance. While MA students are not required to participate in department productions, your involvement with performance is encouraged within the limits of your academic and research commitments. You are also strongly encouraged to take full advantage of the lively and varied theatrical environment made available by Edmonton's theatre community. See more details and links in the General Department Handbook.

INTRODUCTION

Since its approval in 1967, the Master of Arts program has provided a strong introduction to theatre research within the lively performance context of the Department's other professional programs. Its graduates have gone on to make substantial contributions to the academic and professional theatre environment and to the community at large by doing doctoral work and/or becoming teachers, directors, actors, dramaturges, critics, arts administrators, communications and publicity directors, etc.

OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of the MA program is to familiarize you with the research methodology and critical discourse of theatre and performance, lead you to focus on a chosen area of study, and guide you in conducting independent research in that area for the thesis (for thesis-based program) or the extended paper (for course-based program). At the core of the program are a series of seminars in which students present and discuss the results of their own research. The program is flexible enough to allow special projects courses to serve the needs of individual students. Throughout the entire course of study, you will be expected to approach theatre and drama as a dynamic performance-oriented art form and to complement your research with an understanding of the creative process.

The MA program looks at theatre and performance from a critical perspective. For this purpose, we combine research in dramaturgy, theatre history, and dramatic theory/criticism, and we expect our students to approach the discipline integrating all three. MA Thesis proposals may prioritize one of these areas.

Dramaturgy will provide you with the critical tools dramaturges use to enrich the culture of professional theatre or to continue with a PhD in Dramaturgy. You will learn the methods of dramaturgical analysis as applied to new plays as well as classical dramas, and may acquire experience in working with a playwright in the development of a new script or with a director on a specific production. The department offers training in both New Play Development Dramaturgy, as well as Production Dramaturgy.

Theatre History will give you the critical foundation you need to continue with PhD research and to prepare you for future careers in the arts and higher education.

You will focus on the history of theatrical production: the styles of acting, theatre architecture, the audience response to and involvement in production, the evolution of set, costume and lighting design, and directorial practice. You may also study the complexities of historiographic methods as related to performance and the socio-historical and material conditions that surround performances.

In your study of Dramatic Theory and Criticism you will learn how to become a discriminating critic and reviewer, and will receive the necessary background to undertake doctoral research in Theatre and Performance. You will learn the methods of dramaturgical analysis; study theatre aesthetics, the history and philosophy of theatre as a form across cultures; and become conversant in current developments in critical theory. You will be encouraged to pursue comparatively traditional research such as the editing of plays for performance and contemporary critical approaches in areas such as audience reception, adaptation, feminist/gender criticism, semiotics, post-structural theory, and cultural studies.

In addition, all MA students are encouraged to begin developing broad backgrounds in languages, the other Fine Arts, the Social Sciences (History, Anthropology, Sociology), Literature and Philosophy.

FUNDING

We aim to fund our students as best as we can, though priority is given to thesis-based (full-time) students. Funding sources include Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) and Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA), Tuition differentials, national, provincial and institutional scholarships.

All eligible students are expected to apply for a [Social Sciences and Humanities \(SSHRC\) Canada Graduate Scholarship-Master's \(CGS-M\)](#) (\$27,000) in the first term of their first year.

Course-based MA students will not normally be awarded GRAs and GTAs, but fully qualify for all other graduate funding. We encourage applicants and students to fervently pursue their own funding opportunities.

More details on funding opportunities are found in the Graduate Handbook.

The Program Requirements

In addition to general requirements highlighted in the [Graduate Handbook](#), you must demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one approved language other than English. (See “The Language Requirement”).

Although the thesis-based program normally involves three academic terms of course work, applicants with degrees in disciplines other than Drama or Theatre, and/or without sufficient preparation in Theatre History and Criticism may be asked to take a qualifying year to improve their background before applying for admission to the MA program, or may be required to complete an additional term of course work.

ETHICS AND ACADEMIC CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) expects all graduate students to fulfill the [Ethics + Academic Citizenship Requirement](#). You are automatically enrolled in INTD 710 on BearTracks on August 1st of your first year. This requirement must be met by the end of your first term.

INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENT

All MA students must complete their [Independent Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) within the first 12 months of the program and the [Professional Development \(PD\)](#) requirement by the end of the program. Please see the Graduate handbook for more details.

Thesis-Based MA

Because MA enrollment is kept relatively low, our courses are small enough to allow students to get to know each other well and to receive good guidance and supervision from faculty.

- All students must complete 8 courses or 24 units of course weight (CW) ,
- These include Historical (DRAMA 608) and Contemporary (DRAMA 609) Theory courses.
- All MA students must complete the Research Methods course (DRAMA 601 worth 3 units of course weight) which prepares you for critical research and writing, including the thesis proposal.

Through its Special Projects option (DRAMA 605) the Department also allows you to pursue independent study in areas outside of its usual course offerings. The availability of special projects courses, however, is dependent on the willingness of qualified faculty who must agree to teach these courses as an overload. DRAMA 605 is normally only taken in your second year and you must develop your proposal in conjunction with a supervisor before registering in order to complete your registration as a full-time student.

DRAMA 605 may be used to attain greater knowledge or expertise in an area related to your thesis. Students are normally allowed to take only ONE 605 class during the course of this program.

Typical Course Load

YEAR ONE			
Term One		Term Two	
(9 CW total)		(9 CW total)	
DRAMA 601	(3CW)	Three 500 or 600-level DRAMA courses (3CW)	
INT D 710			
One of DRAMA 608 DRAMA 609	(3CW)		
AND Other 500- or 600-level course	(3CW)		

YEAR TWO		
Term One	(6 CW total)	Term Two
One 600-level DRAMA Course	(3CW)	Thesis
One of DRAMA 608 DRAMA 609 or Other 600-level course	(3CW)	

Finally, because theatre by its very nature is both international and interdisciplinary, you may consider taking a course in another department or program such as: Music, Art and Design, English and Film Studies, Native Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, History, Classics, Romance or Germanic Languages, Anthropology, or Comparative Literature. Only graduate-level courses may count towards the MA degree, but undergraduate courses may be completed on an audit or non-credit basis. For special arrangements, see the MA Coordinator.

Course-Based MA

Course-based MA students take an additional course and write an extended paper that they present during a colloquium. Students take 27 credits of graduate-level courses, including:

- DRAMA 601 (3CW)
- One of DRAMA 608 (3CW) and/or DRAMA 609 (3CW)
- Additional 12 credits of graduate-level (600-level) seminars offered by the Department of Drama
- Additional 9 credits of graduate-level seminars offered by the Department of Drama or another Department within the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education or Faculty of Native Studies.
- The extended paper for the course-based MA should be 25-30 pages in length. The student's supervisor and another faculty member will read and evaluate the paper. During their final term, students register for DRAMA 695 (this course carries 'zero' credits). The final presentation of the student's research must be given to an audience of peers and faculty and should be 20-30 minutes in length.

NOTE: The course-based MA does not require full-time residency. Course-based students shall normally not take DRAMA 605 (Special Projects).

THE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

All MA students must have reading proficiency in a language other than English. You will choose a language which is relevant for your thesis research. For example, if you want to write on Polish theatre, we would want you to be able to read Polish. Depending on their thesis topic, students who are native speakers in a language other than English may have this requirement waived by the MA or Graduate Coordinator.

This requirement may be met in one of the following ways:

- A student may have taken and obtained a grade of C+ or better in any 212 Intermediate level language or the equivalent, other than English. The
- course(s) must not have been taken more than three years prior to admission as a provisional PhD or MA candidate.
- Students may take the appropriate undergraduate course(s) but with a graduate course number and must receive a minimum grade of C+. Please contact MLCS' Undergraduate Advisor, to request an upgrade to a graduate course number. The student will continue to attend the undergraduate course section and complete all course requirements. The grade received will show as CR or NC.
- If students have a reading knowledge of the language, they may take a Language Proficiency Examination given by MLCS.

If you choose the latter option, you may wish to complete the 500-level courses (it may be a different number) as a refresher until you feel ready to take the exam. Proficiency Examinations are available through eClass, and students may challenge the examination at any time during the academic year. Please email mlcs@ualberta.ca to register to write the exam. Please note that students are responsible for registering for this examination well in advance of any program deadlines. Last minute requests may not be accommodated.

For the exam, you must bring two works that have been approved by the MA or Grad Coordinator and by the Language Examiner, and from which you will be asked to translate one or more passages with the aid of a dictionary and answer reading comprehension questions.

See the [Graduate Language Proficiency Exam](#) website for Information about the language proficiency exam process.

THE MA THESIS

During the first term of the program you should think about research topics which you might wish to pursue within the scope of your MA thesis. DRAMA 601 will help you with the preparation of your thesis proposal. After discussion with the MA Coordinator, other students and faculty, you should draw up a brief description of the thesis idea which can then be discussed with potential thesis supervisors. Once a full-time continuing faculty member has agreed to be your supervisor you must submit a proposal briefly outlining:

- the thesis topic,
- its importance and scope,
- its relationship to previous research,
- the research procedure(s),
- major primary and secondary materials to be consulted and their availability,
- the anticipated organization of the thesis, and
- the tentative timetable for completion.

By the end of your first year, the proposal should be submitted to the Graduate Committee with the signatures of both you and your supervisor. (See Graduate Handbook for Deadlines).

A bibliography is customarily appended to the proposal for reference purposes. As soon as you have the proposal approved by the Graduate Committee, you should begin work on your thesis. If your topic requires, you may wish to take advantage of research travel money available through the [Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research](#) (\$1,500 maximum).

The Thesis Committee, which typically consists of a non-examining Chair, your supervisor, a full time Drama faculty member, and a non-Drama Arts faculty member, is chosen by your supervisor in dialogue with you.

An MA thesis should not exceed 75 pages. When your supervisor feels that your thesis is ready to go forward to the oral defense, they will schedule it, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. Following a successful defense, you will submit your thesis in electronic form to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The thesis must be prepared according to the required format to be found at: [Thesis Preparation Requirements and Deadlines](#).

The Drama Department requires that you submit one bound copy to the Guberman Reading Room. You may want to browse these shelves to see examples of previous students' MA work. In addition, it is customary for you to offer a copy of your thesis to your supervisor.

Timeline and Checklist

YEAR ONE													
<input type="checkbox"/> Initial meeting with MA Coordinator (before beginning of term)													
<input type="checkbox"/> Courses Year One Term One <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> INT D 710 Ethics and Academic Citizenship <input type="checkbox"/> DRAMA 601 <input type="checkbox"/> One of DRAMA 608 or 609 <input type="checkbox"/> 600-level DRAMA OR <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____ 	<input type="checkbox"/> Courses Year One Term Two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 600-level DRAMA <input type="checkbox"/> 600-level DRAMA <input type="checkbox"/> 600-level DRAMA OR <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: _____ 												
<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Supervisor chosen (end of November) <input type="checkbox"/> Decision to switch to Course-based MA declared/approved (Mid-January) <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis or extended paper proposal submitted to Supervisor (End of January) <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis or extended paper proposal submitted to Graduate Committee (Mid-February) <input type="checkbox"/> Reading List for thesis or extended paper research submitted to supervisor (May)													
Strongly Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> SSHRC application (CHECK DEADLINES IN EARLY FALL) <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in performance projects. Please list: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table> <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in conferences, seminars, colloquia. Please list: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table> <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in Graduate Teaching and Learning Workshops. Please list: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table> 													

Signatures:

MA Candidate: _____ Date: _____

MA Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Thesis/Ext.Paper Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

YEAR TWO

<input type="checkbox"/> Courses Year Two Term One <input type="checkbox"/> One of DRAMA 608 or 609 <input type="checkbox"/> 600-level DRAMA <input type="checkbox"/> Course-based MA additional 3CW course: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Courses Year Two Term Two <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis or Extended Paper
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

- Course work completed **(end of third term)**
- Language requirement complete **(end of third term)**
- Draft of thesis or extended paper completed and approved by Supervisor **(end of February)**
- Final draft of thesis or extended paper completed and submitted to Graduate Committee or to second reader) **(March 15)**
- Oral thesis defense or Course-based final presentation **(April 15)**

Strongly Recommended:

- Participation in performance projects. Please list:

- Participation in conferences, seminars, colloquia. Please list:

- Participation in Graduate Teaching and Learning Workshops. Please list:

Signatures:

MA Candidate: _____ Date: _____
MA Coordinator: _____ Date: _____
Thesis/Ext.Paper Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Performance Opportunities

The MA program normally provides opportunities for practical engagement with performance through dramaturgy. With the exception of the dramaturgy courses, the program does not require practical training in aspects of performance.

However, it is self-evident that in order to study the culture of performance, inside knowledge of its practice can often be a bonus.

We support students to pursue practical opportunities, while also cautioning not to let these engagements stand in the way of timely conclusion of thesis research and writing.

Closing Remarks:

We are very happy to welcome you into our long-standing and rigorous academic program for the study of theatre. The two years you'll be with us will likely pass by very quickly while you extend your knowledge of theatre while gaining practice and research skills. By the end of your degree you will have made a contribution to the field and be on your way to a satisfying career.