

Drama, M.F.A.

The Department of Drama offers an M.F.A. in Drama, with emphases in Acting, Directing, Design, Music Direction, or Stage Management.

Acting

The Acting faculty is devoted to the development of working professional actors who possess the skills, insight, intelligence, creativity, and vision to create the theatre of the future. UCI has proven itself notably successful in training working professionals with alumni who perform on stages around the country, on and off Broadway, in regional theatres, or in feature films and television series. Many graduates of the program hold faculty positions in university theatre.

Directing

The Directing program is dedicated to the idea that theatre should challenge and expand the mind, move the soul, and delight the spirit. The Directing program is a three-year course of study. The program's first year focuses on directing realistic "character driven" work, along with script analysis and collaboration skills. In the second year, the student director focuses on "language driven" plays, the components of production, and communication in collaboration. The third year centers on original and devised work as well as self-produced projects. Each student is expected to direct every quarter – in the classroom, with student directed projects, and/or in production. In addition, each student will be engaged in full-length plays in the second year. During their course of study, each student will receive, at a minimum, one fully produced show in the main season. One of these will be the student's thesis production in their third year.

Design

The Design program provides a challenging and creative environment for the curious and resourceful design student. Students in this program will be exceptionally well-suited to a career in the theatre and related entertainment arts. Incoming students specialize in a specific discipline: sound design, lighting design, costume design, or scenic design. Study of that specific discipline is at the heart of the student's education. Students will also develop a solid working knowledge of the basic principles and procedures of the other disciplines in order to foster more productive collaboration. In addition, the design curriculum includes the study of theatre history, art history, and dramatic literature. Instruction is focused on the growth of each student's individual design abilities. Students will work in a shared studio space, creating an atmosphere of constructive critique and support. Beyond the regular course load, additional learning opportunities can occur during weekly round tables, design tutorials, masterclasses, and post-performance critiques. The Design program provides professional training that respects our theatrical heritage and the traditional skills of a designer. In addition, a strong emphasis is placed on new technologies and how they affect and enhance contemporary design practices. Training on high-end computers and equipment using the latest software is required in all design disciplines, preparing students for a seamless transition to the professional world.

Music Direction

The Music Direction program prepares artists for a professional life in the theatre as musical directors. Students work with faculty members and other professionals in the Musical Theatre field, receiving instruction and mentoring in conducting, vocal coaching for the actor, musical preparation, script and score analysis, composing and arranging music for the stage, sound design, and singing pedagogy. Students also gain valuable first-hand experience through internships. The program is designed to help students refine/ improve their knowledge base and experience in vocal coaching, conducting, musical preparation of singers, rehearsal techniques, composing, arranging, and producing. Applicants are required to have excellent keyboard skills (including sight-reading, transposition), basic orchestra score-reading and conducting skills, and an understanding and appreciation of musical theatre as a genre. Students have the opportunity to work on musical productions each quarter while being closely mentored by the department's Musical Theatre and associated faculty.

Stage Management

The Stage Management program is dedicated to the professional training of advanced students interested in developing their skills, knowledge, and abilities in stage management. Graduate stage managers work with directors, choreographers, musical directors, and designers in various genres including drama, musical theatre, dance, opera, concerts and special events. Through the course of the program, production assignments grow in complexity. Each graduate student will stage manage or assistant stage manage seven productions. The faculty provides training not only in the area of stage management but also in dramatic literature, the development of theatre, concepts and collaboration, and script analysis which helps stage managers understand how to communicate effectively with all members of the production team on a professional level. In addition, instruction supplemented with visiting professionals from all areas of the live entertainment industry, television, and film.

Applicants for admission to the degree program must meet the general requirements for admission to graduate study and hold a B.A., B.F.A., or higher degree.

Applicants must submit dossiers of biographical information and theatrical experience, together with photographs, essays, reviews, production books, and portfolios, as appropriate. Applicants must submit two letters of recommendation.

An audition is typically required for all applicants who intend to enter the Acting program. UCI coordinates its auditions with the University/Resident Theatre Association (U/RTA), and conducts auditions, both for U/RTA finalists and UCI applicants, in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Irvine during

January and February. Other U/RTA audition sites may be considered. Interviews for applicants in Directing, in Design, in Music Direction, and in Stage Management are also required.

Normally three years of residence is required. Each candidate must enroll for three courses each quarter for nine quarters, exclusive of summer sessions.

The normative time to degree for students in the M.F.A. program is three years. Residence is required. The maximum time to degree can be extended to four years only through petition to the Head of the Program for extenuating circumstances. Students who do not complete the degree in four years will be recommended for academic disqualification.

During the first year of residence each candidate will prepare, for credit, two graduate projects, in acting, directing, design, music direction, stage management, theatrical research, or a combination of two of these. Satisfactory completion of these projects, as determined by the faculty, is prerequisite to entering the second year of the program.

The required thesis normally consists of directing, designing, musically directing, stage managing, or playing a principal role in a major production, and collecting in essay form the evidences of research, analysis, and judgments which formed a part of the production experience.

Each graduate student is expected to participate in productions throughout residence at UCI.

Specific course requirements must be satisfied in one of the following five areas:

Acting Requirements

A. Select nine graduate studios in acting:	
DRAMA 200	Graduate Studio: Acting
B. Students must enroll in each of the following studios every quarter for a total of nine quarters:	
DRAMA 201	Graduate Studio: Voice
DRAMA 202	Graduate Studio: Speech
DRAMA 203	Graduate Studio: Movement
DRAMA 206	Graduate Studio: Voice/Movement Dynamics
C. Select three master classes in acting from various topics offered in DRAMA 219.	
D. Complete the following:	
DRAMA 251A	Foundations of Theatre
E. Select one seminar in dramatic literature, performance theory, criticism, history of theatre, or contemporary theatre from the following:	
DRAMA 220–225	
F. Select six graduate projects, of which two may be the following professional internships:	
DRAMA 240	Graduate Projects
or DRAMA 295	Professional Internship

A total of 110 quarter units in graduate or approved upper-division undergraduate courses must be completed with a grade of at least B in each course.

Design Requirements

A. Select seven graduate studios in design seminars:	
DRAMA 255	Graduate Design Seminar
B. Select six courses in graduate projects (one of which may be a professional internship: DRAMA 295):	
DRAMA 240	Graduate Projects
C. Select two elective courses from courses numbered 100 and above.	
D. Select four courses in dramatic literature, performance theory, criticism, or history of theater from the following:	
DRAMA 220	Seminar in Dramatic Literature
DRAMA 248A- 248B	History of American Music Theatre and History of American Musical Theatre
DRAMA 164A	History of Costume
DRAMA 164B	History of Costume
or other substitutions as approved by mentor.	
E. Select three courses in design techniques from the following:	
DRAMA 258–282	
F. Complete three foundation courses taken during the first year of study:	

DRAMA 251A- 251B- 251C	Foundations of Theatre and Foundations of Theatre and Foundations of Theatre
G. Select eight Colloquium courses:	
DRAMA 259	Theatre Colloquium
H. Complete the following:	
DRAMA 256	Survival and Professional Practice in Design

A total of 112 quarter units in graduate or approved upper-division undergraduate courses must be completed with a grade of at least B in each course.

Directing Requirements

A. Select nine graduate studios in directing:	
DRAMA 211	Graduate Studio: Directing (one of which is the creation of a thesis portfolio and resume)
B. Complete two courses in Foundations:	
DRAMA 251A- 251C	Foundations of Theatre and Foundations of Theatre
C. Select one course in Multiculturalism:	
DRAMA 220	Seminar in Dramatic Literature
D. Select two courses as professional internships:	
DRAMA 295	Professional Internship
E. Select two courses in acting:	
DRAMA 200	Graduate Studio: Acting (may include movement, voice classes approved by the Head of Directing)
F. Select two seminars in dramatic literature, performance theory, criticism, theatre history (approved by the Head of Directing)	
DRAMA 199	Project in Theatre
DRAMA 248A- 248B	History of American Music Theatre and History of American Musical Theatre
G. Select six projects:	
DRAMA 240	Graduate Projects (of which one is the thesis and one is an off-site production)
H. Select two design or stage management courses (approved by the Head of Directing)	
DRAMA 157	Lighting Composition
DRAMA 159	Proseminar in Theatre Design
DRAMA 199	Project in Theatre
DRAMA 254	Graduate Stage Management
DRAMA 255	Graduate Design Seminar
I. And a minimum of three electives.	

A total of 116 quarter units in graduate or approved upper-division undergraduate courses must be completed with a grade of at least B in each course.

Music Direction Requirements

A. Select four projects in theatre or graduate projects:	
DRAMA 199	Project in Theatre
DRAMA 240	Graduate Projects
B. Complete six units in vocal and speech pedagogy:	
DRAMA 241	Singing Pedagogy
C. Complete nine courses in conducting:	
DRAMA 242	Conducting
D. Complete one course in form and analysis:	
DRAMA 243	Script and Score
E. Complete two quarters in abbreviated musicals:	
DRAMA 247	Musicals Abridged

F. Complete two courses in American Musical Theatre History:	
DRAMA 248A	History of American Music Theatre
DRAMA 248B	History of American Musical Theatre
G. Complete nine quarters in musical direction projects:	
DRAMA 249	Graduate Music Direction
H. Complete two courses in foundations of theatre:	
DRAMA 251A	Foundations of Theatre
DRAMA 251C	Foundations of Theatre
I. Select four electives from the following (or other courses with graduate advisor approval):	
Music:	
MUSIC 132	Jazz Theory
MUSIC 148	Studies in Ethnomusicology
MUSIC 150	Composition
Dance:	
DANCE 222	Musical Resources
Drama:	
DRAMA 219	Graduate Master Class
DRAMA 220	Seminar in Dramatic Literature
DRAMA 225	Seminar on Theatre Pedagogy
DRAMA 241	Singing Pedagogy
DRAMA 246A	Musical Scene Study I
DRAMA 246B	Musical Scene Study II
DRAMA 246C	Musical Scene Study III
DRAMA 256	Survival and Professional Practice in Design
DRAMA 266	Digital Design: Digital Audio Systems
DRAMA 267	Digital Design: Creating Sounds from Scratch
DRAMA 290	Dramatic Literature and Theatre History Prior to 1900
DRAMA 291	Dramatic Literature and Theatre History, 1900 to Present

A total of 112 quarter units in graduate or approved upper-division undergraduate courses must be completed with a grade of at least B in each course.

Stage Management Requirements

A. Select seven graduate studios in stage management:	
DRAMA 254	Graduate Stage Management
B. Complete one thesis project course:	
DRAMA 257E	Thesis Writing Project-Stage Management
C. Select seven courses in graduate projects:	
DRAMA 240	Graduate Projects
D. Complete one professional internship course:	
DRAMA 295	Professional Internship
E. Select three electives as approved by the faculty advisor from the following:	
graduate-level (DRAMA 200+)	
upper-division (DRAMA 100–199)	
F. Complete three courses in foundations in theatre:	
DRAMA 251A- 251B- 251C	Foundations of Theatre and Foundations of Theatre and Foundations of Theatre
G. Select two courses in production techniques from the following:	
DRAMA 150–159, 162–164, 167–168, 170–171, 260A, B–262, 265–266	
H. Select one course in dramatic literature, criticism, contemporary theatre, or history of music theatre from the following:	
DRAMA 220	Seminar in Dramatic Literature

DRAMA 248A- 248B	History of American Music Theatre and History of American Musical Theatre
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A total of 112 quarter units in graduate or approved upper-division undergraduate courses must be completed with a grade of at least B in each course.

Graduates from the Department of Drama perform, stage manage, or design on Broadway, in national tours, regional and summer theatres, in films and on television. UC Irvine's Drama alumni serve as artistic directors, business managers, designers, art directors, and performers at more than 100 theatre companies, and are faculty at more than 75 institutions of higher learning.

A degree in Drama may or may not lead to professional employment in theatre or film. While some alumni may pursue careers as professional theatre artists, many may use the skills learned from their degree and embark upon careers in law, business, arts management, advertising, and teaching. Others may pursue further study at UC Irvine or other notable institutions.