The PhD program in theatre and performance studies is primarily designed for those who intend to be scholars working in an academic environment.

At CU Boulder, we believe that scholarship in the field of theatre should be premised on the fact that theatre is a performing art. This does not mean that the standards for theatre scholarship are any less rigorous than those in other disciplines, but it does mean that the theatre scholar must be prepared to use research methodologies and perspectives capable of illuminating drama in performance. To this end, the education of a theatre scholar should entail ongoing experiences in theatre productions.

The program is designed to be completed in four years for students entering with a master’s degree. Conventionally, the first through fourth semesters focus on coursework, the fifth semester is spent preparing for and taking the comprehensive examination, and the sixth through eighth semesters are spent writing and defending the dissertation. While it is possible for a student entering the PhD program with a master’s degree to finish in three years, it is not uncommon for students to take five years to finish.

Requirements

Program Overview

To complete the program, students must:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in academic coursework.
2. Demonstrate reading competency in at least one foreign language equivalent to the completion of a second-semester college-level course.
3. Pass a comprehensive exam.
4. Prepare and successfully defend a dissertation.

Doctoral students in theatre and performance studies complete 30 credit hours of coursework beyond the master’s degree at the 5000 level or above. When approved by the student’s advisor, credit hours from other departments on campus may count, provided the course is taught by a member of the graduate faculty in that department. In addition to the 30 credit hours of coursework, 30 dissertation credit hours (THTR 8999) are required.

Required Courses

The PhD program is based upon a core of required courses which emphasize the interrelatedness of theory, history and practice.

The "on-stage studies" courses place dramatic texts and performance traditions in the context of contemporary performance. They are designed to pose questions like, “How might this play work on the stage today? What problems does it present the contemporary director/dramaturg?” In what ways is it socially relevant? How have directors like Jonathan Miller, Ariane Mnouchkine, Peter Stein, Ivo van Hove, etc., staged them?” In a nutshell, the aim of the on-stage studies curriculum is to teach students to think as dramaturgs and directors, as well as scholars.

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Electives

Additional courses to meet the 30-credit minimum. 14

Dissertation 30

THTR 8999 Doctoral Dissertation

Total Credit Hours 60

Elective Coursework

PhD students are encouraged to take elective courses offered by theatre graduate faculty members in their area of research (e.g., performing voices of women, performance studies, directing, theatre for social change), as well as graduate dance courses (e.g., graduate dance technique, advanced dance composition, African dance). When approved by the student’s advisor, PhD students are encouraged to take courses in other departments, especially as they relate to the anticipated dissertation topic. Electives are determined by students and their advisors, consistent with Graduate School and departmental requirements.

Graduate Independent Study

This may not be used as an avenue for taking undergraduate courses in the major department or replicating existing graduate classes. Although there is no limit to the number of independent study credit hours a doctoral student may take, they should be held to a minimum. Independent study contract forms are available from the Graduate Program Assistant and on the department website.

Production Research and Practicum Courses

These courses in acting, directing, design and dramaturgy may be taken for 1–3 credit hours. A limit of 3 credit hours in each category may apply toward the degree. All courses are supervised by members of the graduate faculty; regular meetings with the instructor of record are required.

Guidelines for flexible credit hours are:

- one credit hour for successfully completing the project
- two credit hours for completing the project and submitting a written record of it (e.g., an actor’s journal, a director’s regiebuch)
- three credit hours for doing all of the above and writing a pertinent 15 to 25 page research paper, with the topic to be determined in consultation with the advisor
Language Requirement
Reading competency in a foreign language is an important skill for a scholar. It allows the student to consider a dissertation topic beyond the limits of English-speaking theatre, thereby significantly broadening his or her research and publishing possibilities. Doctoral students are required to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to the completion of a second-semester college-level course before taking the comprehensive exam. This requirement may be fulfilled by coursework taken within five years previous to the exam or by testing.

Dissertation
The PhD program culminates in the dissertation, a research document that makes a significant and original contribution to the field of theatre studies.