

SENIOR THESIS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Barnard College Major in Theatre/Columbia College Major in Drama and Theatre Arts offers several thesis options: a performance thesis in the field of acting, directing, design, playwriting, dramaturgy, or a research thesis in any area of theatre or performance studies. Given the fact that theses involve the commitment of considerable resources, and may require the student to do additional coursework in order to be ready for a successful experience, we both request proposals in January of the junior year, and encourage students to plan ahead!

We believe that all theses provide a unique experience for students, at once a capstone of undergraduate work and a springboard to further endeavors. The performance thesis enables a student actor, director, designer, dramaturg, or playwright, to work closely with a faculty mentor; to work through a clearly-mapped production process; and to receive instructive feedback on the character and quality of artistic work. While the thesis necessarily builds on advanced work in the specific discipline, it also should go beyond previous competencies, chart new ground. The research thesis enables students either to develop a previously written essay or undertake a new inquiry, working closely with a faculty mentor.

For this reason, it's important for majors contemplating a thesis to be weighing their decision ahead of time. A successful application for a *directing* thesis should not only propose a production that clearly develops from and beyond a student's previous work, but should be based on successful performance in directing courses; students proposing a directing thesis have typically served as an assistant director and/or as stage manager on a departmental production prior to making the proposal, or plan to do so during the spring term of the junior year; they have taken at least one directing course at the time of proposing, and will take the Dramaturgy course if not already taken; a directing thesis may be proposed in conjunction with a dramaturgy thesis. Similarly, a student proposing a *design* thesis should have performed well in design courses (at least one), and typically would have worked as an assistant designer and/or have designed a departmental production prior to the proposal or during the spring term of the junior year. A student proposing an *acting* thesis should typically have performed well in acting classes and typically would have appeared onstage in a departmental production prior to making the proposal. Students proposing a *solo performance* thesis are expected to participate in the Solo Performance course in the thesis year, and should have had significant performing and writing experience. Students proposing a *playwriting* thesis are expected to have performed well in at least one playwriting course. Students proposing a *dramaturgy* thesis should have taken the Dramaturgy course, and may have assisted as dramaturg on a senior thesis or other student-directed production; a dramaturgy thesis should be proposed in conjunction with a directing thesis. To be eligible for a performance thesis of any kind, students *must have completed crew assignments prior to the performance thesis semester*.

Students proposing a *research* thesis in any area of drama/theatre/performance studies should also have written a paper in the field of proposed study and perhaps even have a course essay from which the thesis project might grow.

All Thesis requests are due by the January deadline; students are required to list *three* alternatives in ranked order of preference. Please be aware that the Thesis committee will carefully consider your application, and will also be looking to see that coursework and crew assignments relative to your proposal have been fulfilled.

For a fuller description of the thesis, please see "The Senior Thesis" on the Major/Department Information page of the Barnard Theatre Department website. The "Thesis guidelines" for each thesis describe in detail the research, documentation, writing, and "casebook" part of performance theses, as well as the procedure for dramaturgy and research theses.

SENIOR THESIS OPTIONS:

I. SENIOR THESIS: PERFORMANCE (THTR UN 3997: FIELD)

Students approved to pursue a thesis in a given area may be required to take specific coursework in the semester(s) preceding the thesis production (for example, Advanced Directing), and/or to attend formal courses (Solo Performance, Playwriting Lab, etc.) in conjunction with their registration for the Thesis. Crew assignments must be completed the semester prior to the thesis semester.

1. **ACTING** in a faculty-directed or guest-directed production (Fall and Spring semesters).
Students approved for an acting thesis have typically been cast a significant role in a departmental production, and have taken at least two upper-level acting classes prior to making the proposal, and all three prior to the thesis performance. Students approved for an acting thesis will be auditioned later in the spring semester of the junior year and will be cast at that time in a production scheduled for their senior year. Students who are on study abroad will audition long distance, via Skype. All students undertaking an acting thesis must have taken three of the listed acting classes prior to graduation and will register for THTR UN 3997: ACTING in the semester of thesis.
2. **ACTING** in a solo performance piece to be created in the spring semester of the senior year and performed in the Thesis Festival in May. **Students will take the THTR UN 3004 Solo Performance in the fall semester of the senior year unless they have taken it previously; if so, they may audit the fall semester course as part of the process of developing their work. They will typically have taken at least two upper-division acting classes prior to making the proposal, and all three prior to the thesis performance. They will then take THTR UN 3997: SOLO PERFORMANCE in the spring semester.**
3. **DESIGNING** in a departmental production, either faculty directed or the Senior Thesis Festival; students may propose to undertake Scenic, Costume, Sound, and/or Lighting Design. **Students approved for a design thesis have typically worked as assistant designer on a departmental show, and have taken at least one design class prior to making the proposal, and three prior to the thesis performance. All students undertaking a design thesis must have taken three of the listed design classes prior to graduation, and register for THTR UN 3997: DESIGN in the semester of the thesis.**
4. **DIRECTING** a play in the Senior Thesis Festival, in May of the senior year.
Students approved for a directing thesis have typically worked as assistant director or stage manager on a departmental show, and have taken at least one directing class prior to the proposal; they will take Dramaturgy before completing the thesis, if not already taken at the time of the proposal. Directing thesis students complete three directing classes prior to the thesis performance; they take Advanced Directing in the fall semester of senior year, and register for THTR UN 3997: DIRECTING in the spring semester of the senior year.
5. **DRAMATURGING** a production in the departmental season, in collaboration with a Senior Thesis in Directing project. A dramaturgy thesis proposal should identify required coursework and experience in the field and **should be proposed in conjunction with a senior thesis in directing. Students approved for a dramaturgy thesis must have taken the Dramaturgy course prior to proposing, and be in the process of completing the additional coursework in theatre and performance studies. Students approved for a dramaturgy thesis must complete the additional two courses in theatre and performance studies (total of 4; 1 may be playwriting) by graduation, and will register for THTR UN 3997: DRAMATURGY in the semester of the thesis.**

6. **WRITING** a play or performance script that will be given a staged reading in the Thesis Festival, May of the senior year. **Students should have taken at least one playwriting class by the time of application, and at least two by graduation. Students approved for a playwriting thesis must submit the script to the playwriting thesis adviser in the Theatre department during the Fall term of the thesis year in order to remain eligible for the Spring semester staged reading; students register for THTR UN 3997: PLAYWRITING in the spring semester of the senior year.**

The Department does not consider non-departmental projects in fulfillment of the senior thesis. Full details on the research and writing required to accompany the performance as part of the thesis process are available under the "Thesis guidelines" of the appropriate field on the website.

Performance theses are seen, read, and graded by the adviser and one additional member of the BC Department of Theatre/CU Interdepartmental Committee on Drama and Theatre Arts, as appointed by the Chair of the BC Theatre Department. On occasion a second reader may be sought from off campus, if there is a willing scholar with significant research expertise in the field.

II. SENIOR THESIS: RESEARCH (THTR UN 3998)

A research thesis proposal should identify, in a preliminary way, not only the general field of the project, but a specific line of inquiry; it need not be extensive, but should give some idea of the kinds of questions to be asked, and what material will be examined as a means of following those questions out. The thesis is typically in the range of 25-30 pages, and undertakes an original, critical study of a problem in the history, theory, or practice of drama, theatre, and performance. Students proposing a written thesis will preferably meet with the potential adviser prior to the proposal (the name of adviser or potential adviser should be noted on the proposal). Advisers may be selected from appropriate faculty in the BC Department of Theatre, or from the CU Interdepartmental Committee in Drama and Theatre Arts, with the approval of the chair of the Department of Theatre. The thesis is a one-semester project (though preparation, as with performance theses, frequently extends into the previous term), and is preferably taken in the spring semester of the senior year, but may be taken in the fall semester with prior approval. Students undertaking a Research thesis must have two additional research-oriented courses toward the degree prior to graduation; these courses are typically taken in the Department of Theatre, but may, with advisor's approval, be taken in literature departments at Barnard or Columbia. If these courses have not been completed at the time of the proposal, they should also be discussed with the student's thesis adviser.

Research theses are read and graded by the adviser and one additional member of the BC Department of Theatre/CU Interdepartmental Committee on Drama and Theatre Arts.

TIMETABLE

Spring junior year

January: Thesis proposals from all students due. Students who have yet to serve as assistant director, stage manager, or assistant designer ask to be considered for these positions in the spring semester.

February: Thesis committee approves thesis candidates for the following year. Design, and dramaturgy students assigned to specific shows in the coming season; students in these fields should expect some preparatory work over the summer if assigned to the first fall show. Acting students audition in March/April and are cast in roles for the following year; they should expect preparatory work over the summer if cast in either fall production. Research students meet with adviser about timetable of thesis in following year.

Fall senior year

Approved directing candidates take Advanced Directing; playwriting candidates take Play Development and meet with playwriting adviser. Solo performance candidates take Solo Performance course. Design and acting theses assigned to fall productions move into production, registered for THTRV 3997 with appropriate adviser. Those assigned to the spring should consult with the relevant adviser.

Research candidates electing to write thesis in fall semester work with faculty mentor on research and writing the thesis; research candidates electing to write thesis in spring make contact with faculty mentor with regard to timetable.

November: Playwriting candidates submit draft of play to playwriting adviser.

Fall semester performance theses: Casebook materials due to Department, adviser, and second reader by noon the Friday following performance, without exception. Fall semester research theses: Due to Department, adviser, and second reader by noon on the Monday prior to the last class day, without exception.

Spring senior year:

Approved directing candidates move into production, registered for THTRV 3997 with Directing adviser; approved playwriting candidates revise final draft and move into production of staged reading, registered for THTRV 3997 with Playwriting adviser; solo performance candidates finalize performance text and move into production, registered for THTRV 3997 with Solo Performance adviser; design, dramaturgy, and acting theses assigned to spring productions move into production, registered for THTRV 3997 with appropriate adviser.

Research candidates electing to write thesis in spring semester work with faculty mentor on research and writing the thesis.

Spring semester performance theses in acting, directing, dramaturgy, design: Casebook materials due to Department, adviser, and second reader by noon the Friday following performance, without exception. Spring semester performance theses in solo performance and playwriting: Casebook materials due to Department, adviser, and second reader by Tuesday following performance, without exception. Spring semester research theses: Due to adviser and second reader by noon on the Monday prior to the last class day, without exception.

PLEASE COPY THE FOLLOWING PAGES INTO A NEW DOCUMENT AND COMPLETE: SUBMIT ONLY THAT DOCUMENT AS YOUR PROPOSAL—DO NOT SUBMIT THE FOREGOING DESCRIPTIONS.

SENIOR THESIS PROPOSAL: THEATRE MAJOR/DRAMA AND THEATRE ARTS MAJOR

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ONLY (delete the previous section) TO Coretta Grant (cgrant@barnard.edu) AS AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT BY **MONDAY JANUARY 28**

Name:

E-mail address:

Barnard, Columbia, or General Studies:

Majors other than Theatre:

Phone # for school year:

Phone # for summer:

1. What courses have you taken so far to complete the Theatre major? (List course, year, instructor, title).

2. What courses do you have to take to complete your graduation and major requirements?

3. What were your crew assignments? If not complete, when will you complete them? (If you are not sure whether you have completed your crew assignment, please contact Production Manager Mike Banta at mbanat@barnard.edu.)

4. What productions have you been involved with in the department? How were you involved (actor, crew, design, dramaturg, etc.)?

5. Please list THREE choices and rank in order of preference (for example, directing, acting, dramaturgy; or research, directing, design). For each choice, write a brief plan or rationale, c. 250 words each. **PROPOSALS are considered on the basis of several criteria, including previous qualifying coursework and the substance and clarity of the proposal.**

-Acting: discuss strengths as an actor and areas you wish to develop in the thesis.

-Solo Performance: propose a topic, theme, issue you wish to explore in the development, rehearsal, and performance phases of the Solo Performance thesis

-Design: discuss field of proposed thesis and work you've done in that area.

-Directing: discuss two works of 50 minutes or less you propose to direct; if possible, propose in conjunction with potential candidate in Dramaturgy.

-Playwriting: is there a draft of your play extant? If so discuss it, or new direction you plan to take on the thesis.

-Dramaturgy: discuss previous preparation and goals for thesis work; if possible, propose in conjunction with potential candidate in Directing.

-Research: discuss subject of thesis and/or paper to be developed, significance of the project; propose a potential adviser from the Theatre Department research faculty.

Your proposals will be discussed by the faculty committee. Please check the online catalogue and departmental website for prerequisites for the thesis choices; the departmental website describes the required coursework for each thesis field, and also has downloadable descriptions of the written requirements and deadlines. It is assumed that you will do appropriate advanced coursework in the area of your thesis specialization prior to and during the thesis semester as required.