

Theatre Program Goals and Assessment of Student Learning

Mission Statement:

Theatre Performance

At Juniata, we train students to be creators of theatre as well as interpreters of existing plays. Within the Theatre POE, we offer a very rigorous sequence of technique courses, designed to prepare students for admission to graduate/conservatory programs, or to pursue a professional career in the work. Introductory studio courses cover the fundamentals of acting and text analysis, as well as an introduction to movement theatre techniques such as Suzuki, Viewpoints, Laban, and Skinner Releasing Technique; intermediate courses focus on crafting character and scene study; advanced electives include Acting Shakespeare, Advanced Scene Study, Acting for Camera, and Fitzmaurice Voicework. Lecture classes focus on Theatre History, Playwriting, Performance Theory, and Dramaturgy. Students also have many opportunities over each year to perform or work behind the scenes on full productions on the main stage. Study abroad opportunities include York St. John, during the school year and others, which are being developed currently for summer sessions.

Technical Theatre

Students who wish to study Technical theatre are encouraged to craft a minor out of courses in our program, while following a curriculum outlined in the **Integrated Media Arts POE**, or to individualize their POE. Juniata offers hands-on experience year round in scenic building, lighting design, hanging and programming, stage management, costume building, sound editing and mixing, and new technologies in multi-media work. Although we do not currently have any faculty on the design or tech side of our program, students work side by side with professional designers all year long, and have a very high percentage of job placements after graduation.

For the purpose of this assessment, we will focus on the Theatre Performance POE from here on.

Student Learning Outcomes

Theatre Performance POE's will graduate with a strong facility in many different areas of work, including theatre history, performance of classical and modern texts, contemporary and avant-garde texts, original pieces that they create, musical theatre, circus techniques, and a vast array of movement techniques designed to create whole and versatile performers. Students are mentored in professional development, creating web presences for themselves, headshots and resumes, and

reels, and are steered toward professional internships early in their college careers, so that they begin their professional connections early.

These connections and training are enhanced and fostered by **The Gravity Partners**; Juniata's rotating faculty of professional teaching artists from major metropolitan areas across the USA and Canada. These guest artists teach intensive courses throughout the year in specialized areas of expertise.

Learning outcomes for a student of Theatre at Juniata:

- Must be able to find and critically assess scholarly material
- Encourage a greater sensitivity and awareness of the physical and emotional instrument
- Engender a rigorous professionalism and work ethic
- Develop of detailed working knowledge of the history and theories surrounding theatre
- Learn how to balance both a disciplined precision and creative freedom in their work
- Devise and create new works that emerge out of self-motivated timelines and benchmarks
- Embrace a lifelong conduct of professional behavior in and out of the lab
- Challenge their preconceived notions of the limitations of performance
- Develop qualitative and quantitative skills for assessing theatrical work they observe

It is our intention that Theatre students should graduate with a strong sense of this work as a lifelong, and personally enriching process with a strong supportive network of teachers and peers on whom to rely. These teachers and peers are spread out in small and large cities across America. We recognize that the arts can be life changing in a community, not only for the artist, but for the audience as well. Our students will make a difference in their communities, whether it is through their performances, their teaching, or their inspiring of others.

Assessment Tools and Methods

Permanent and visiting (Gravity Partners) faculty will evaluate and assess students on their **performance work** (in studio classes, rehearsal/performance, and professional intensives) by this set of criteria:

- Students work with interest, commitment, and effort
- Students work cooperatively in groups
- Students take direction without ego-driven outbursts or sulking, and in all ways behave according to the Theatre Code of Ethics.
- Students explore ideas/use their dramatic imagination on stage and in the studio
- Students exhibit preparedness in rehearsal and performance

- Students demonstrate facility with characterization (vocal, physical, and in keeping with the given circumstances of the play/the director's intent)

Faculty will evaluate and assess students on their **written work** (in lecture courses or in performance-based courses) by this set of criteria:

- Students are able to locate, digest, and present scholarly material
- Students are able to write strong research papers for Theatre History
- Students complete process papers in Acting and Scene Study classes, as well as logs, journals, character notebooks, and other written exercises.
- Students are given quizzes on anatomy and vocabulary in Voice, and on theatre terms in Acting.
- Students collect all work over four years in one portfolio that is organized into the different areas of their study.

Individual student meeting times are set up at the end of each semester with Faculty to discuss the actor's process paper, and to identify areas for growth, as well as to acknowledge gains made in the past semesters' work

Time Line for Implementation/Analysis of Results

We are currently assessing students according to the rubrics outlined above. Because our program is undergoing much change, we are currently putting a stronger focus on scholarly work along with the skills-based training our Theatre Performance POE students receive. However, in any creative field, the measuring of data is somewhat more subjective than in fields in which there is a right or wrong answer to something. Our students' learning is in creative practice, which is a process that happens in its own time for each person. What we ask of them is their utmost effort toward the cultivation of that process in the ways we have identified here.

Program for Improvement

We are planning to add new courses to our Theatre Performance POE, to structure a written element for Theatre Arts Practicum students, to create a procedural and assessment model for Senior Capstones, and to more clearly outline the parameters of the Technical Theatre student's trajectory, and the Theatre Performance Minor.

New core courses:

Acting II (3 credits)

Performance Theory (3 credits)

New elective course:

Playwriting

Senior Capstones:

Students must present a proposal in their junior year for their Capstone project. If it is accepted, students must meet regularly with faculty over the course of their senior year to demonstrate progress. They must also present the project in written form, with analysis of their process. Capstones will be treated as a Senior Thesis, which they will defend to a faculty panel after the performance or showcase. Currently, the capstones are non-credit bearing, and have no written elements or assessment built in. We would like to change this starting in 2013/14.

Theatre Arts Practicum:

All students who work on the main stage shows must keep a written log, which will be turned in at the end of the term, which will measure their process in the work.

Requirements of a Theatre Performance Minor POE:

Acting I (3 credits)
Voice and Speech I (3 credits)
Theatre Arts Practicum (9 credits over 4 years)
Living Theatre History (3 credits)

Requirements (in the Theatre Program) of a Technical Theatre/IMA POE:

Practicum (9 credits over 4 years)
Living Theatre History (3 credits)
Tech Lab (6 credits over 4 years)