THEATRE ARTS (THAR)

THAR 066 African American Drama: From the 1920's to the present
This course will introduce students to Pulitzer-prize winning plays such as Lynn Nottage's Sweat, groundbreaking plays such as Ntozake Shange's For Colored Girls, as well as less known plays that show the wide range of form and themes in 20th and 21st century African American drama. We will focus on performance as a mode of interpreting a script and performance as a way of understanding the intersections of race, class, and gender. In-class viewings of selected scenes in recorded productions of the plays will energize our analysis of the scripts. Short creative, performance-oriented writing assignments will produce the questions explored in the two critical essays. In addition to Sweat and For Colored Girls, our line-up may include Zora Neale Hurston's Color Struck, Anna Deavere Smith's Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992, Suzan-Lori Parks' 100 Plays for the First Hundred Days, August Wilson's Radio Golf, Lydia Diamond's Harriet Jacobs, Amiri Baraka's The Slave, and Claudia Rankine's The White Card.
Taught by: Crawford
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 066, ENGL 066
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 073 Literature and the Visual Art
Also Offered As: ARTH 299, CIMS 073, COML 073, ENGL 073, LALS 073
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 076 Theatre in Philadelphia
This course will investigate the state of the contemporary, non-profit theatre culture of Philadelphia by examining the history, artistic mission, and current production work of selected city theatre companies. This course will also explore the creative process of theatre-making as undertaken by these theatres through the reading of plays being produced by them this fall, through an analysis of the collaborative contribution of the playwright, director, actors, and designers to the creation of a production, and, finally, through attendance at those productions mounted by the theatre companies under investigation. The members of the class will write individual essays responding to these productions, do research and give group presentations on other Philadelphia theatre companies, and participate daily in a spirited dialogue about the vitality, level of artistic accomplishment, and cultural/social value of contemporary theatre in Philadelphia
Taught by: Malague and Schlatter
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Frequently offered as a Freshmen Seminar

THAR 100 Introduction to Theatre Arts
This course is an introduction to theatre as a unique art form, in which we will pursue the following questions. What is theatre? For whom—and by whom—is it created and performed? What does it take to "make theatre?" What is the role of theatre in society and in our culture(s)? We will learn to read plays as scripts designed for performance, and one of our key goals will be to discover how to interpret and assess the experience of live performance itself. Among the things we will consider are the distinct roles of actors, directors, designers, playwrights, producers, spectators, and critics; we will also visit a variety of performance spaces in Philadelphia, where we will view live theatre together. The class will feature visits from professional artists, and may present opportunities for creative as well as analytical work.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Malague
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 101 Theatre, History, Culture I: From Classical to the Middle Classes
This course investigates the history of theatre practice in Europe and Asia from Fifth-Century Athens to roughly the end of the Eighteenth Century. In addition to analyzing major dramatic works, this course examines the evolution of production methods - scenography, acting, costuming, theatre architecture - across cultures and key socio-historical moments. Readings will be drawn from historical research, theoretical writings, plays and contemporary social documents. A particular focus will be on the integral role that the theatre plays as a cultural institution in the ongoing civic life of major cities. The course approaches theatre as broadly interdisciplinary and examines its intersection with religious practice, political developments, national identity, geography, the visual arts and the urban landscape.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Also Offered As: ENGL 087
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 102 Theatre, History, Culture II: Romantics, Realists and Revolutionaries
This course investigates the history of theatre practice from the end of the Eighteenth-Century to the present, with an emphasis on interplay of mainstream practices with the newly emerging aesthetics of acting, scenography, and theatrical theory; and the interplay of popular entertainment and audiences with the self-defined aesthetic elitism of the Avant Garde. Among the aesthetics and phenomena we will examine are romanticism and melodrama; bourgeois realism and revolutionary naturalism; emotional-realist acting; the reaction against realism; political theatre; physical theatre; theatre and media; non-dramatic theatre; and theatre that challenges long-standing categories of national identity, empire, gender, and sexuality.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Also Offered As: ENGL 097
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 105 Narrative Across Cultures
The purpose of this course is to present a variety of narrative genres
and to discuss and illustrate the modes whereby they can be analyzed.
We will be looking at shorter types of narrative: short stories, novellas,
and fables, and also some extracts from longer works such as
autobiographies. While some works will come from the Anglo-American
tradition, a larger number will be selected from European and non-
Western cultural traditions and from earlier time-periods. The course
will thus offer ample opportunity for the exploration of the translation of
cultural values in a comparative perspective.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Loomba
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: COML 125, ENGL 103, NELC 180, SAST 124
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 114 Playwriting Workshop
This course is designed as a hands-on workshop in the art and craft
of dramatic writing. It involves the study of new plays, the systematic
exploration of such elements as storytelling, plot, structure, theme,
character, dialogue, setting, etc.; and most importantly, the development
of students’ own short plays through a series of written assignments and
in-class exercises. Since a great deal of this work takes place in class -
through lectures, discussions, spontaneous writing exercises, and the
reading of student work - weekly attendance and active participation is
crucial. At the end of the semester, students’ plays are read in a staged
reading environment by professional actors.
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: ENGL 114
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 115 Self-Scripting: Writing through Body and Space
In Self-Scripting, students will write through a variety of exercises and
activities that put text into play with the body and space. Over the course
of the semester, students will actively engage space and composition as
they develop and explore scriptwriting for performance. We will explore
exercises in an active laboratory setting. This course aims to expand on
techniques for writing plays, poetry, and experimental biography.
Taught by: O’Karra
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 136
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 116 Experimental Playwriting
In this course, students will write for theater and performance. Writers in
the class will take cues from a myriad of experimental playwrights and
performance artists who have challenged conventional ideas of what a
script should look and sound like. Students will be asked to challenge
how narrative is constructed, how characters are built and what a setting
can be. This class will push beyond the formal structures of the well-
made play script and address how writers explore and reinvent form
and language as a means for radical change in the field of performance.
Some playwrights we will read include Gertrude Stein, Suzan-Lori Parks,
Maria Irene Fornes, Robert O’Hara, Young Jean Lee, John Jesurun,
and Toshiki Okada. This class is ideal for playwrights, performers,
screenwriters, and writers of experimental fiction. This course is cross-
listed with Theatre Arts.
Taught by: O’Harra
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 136
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 120 Introduction to Acting
Rooted in the system devised by Constantine Stanislavsky, but
incorporating a wide variety of approaches, including improvisation, this
course takes students step by step through the practical work an actor
must do to live and behave truthfully on-stage. Beginning with relaxation
and physical exercise, interactive games, and ensemble building,
students then learn and put into practice basic acting techniques,
including sensory work, the principles of action, objectives, given
circumstances, etc. The semester culminates in the performance of a
scene or scenes, most often from a play from the Realist tradition. This
course strongly stresses a commitment to actor work and responsibility
to one’s fellow actors. Practical work is supplemented by readings from
Stanislavsky and a variety of other acting theorists that may include Uta
Hagen, Robert Cohen, Stella Adler, among others. Students are required
to submit short essays over the course of the semester in response to
the readings and in preparation for their final scene project. Prerequisite:
Required of all Theatre Arts Majors
Taught by: Ferguson, Malague, Schlatter, and Staff
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 121 Introduction to Directing
This class will introduce the basic principals of stage directing, beginning
with the fundamentals of three-dimensional storytelling in script and
character analysis. The aim of this course is to provide students with a
basic knowledge of directing through an introduction to the functional
tools of the craft. Classes provide lectures and practical work in dealing
with topics such as the function of the director, analyzing a script, visual
composition, blocking, stage business, and working with actors. This
course is a prerequisite for Advanced Directing. Prerequisite: Required of
all Theatre Arts Majors
Taught by: Ferguson, Malague, Mazer, Schlatter and O’Harra
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 125 The Play: Structure, Style, Meaning
How does one read a play? Theatre, as a discipline, focuses on the traditions of live performance. In those traditions, a play text must be read not only as a piece of literature, but as a kind of "blueprint" from which productions are built. This course will introduce students to a variety of approaches to reading plays and performance pieces. Drawing on a wide range of dramatic texts from different periods and places, we will examine how plays are made, considering issues such as structure, genre, style, character, and language, as well as the use of time, space, and theatrical effects. Although the course is devoted to the reading and analysis of plays, we will also view selected live and/or filmed versions of several of the scripts we study, assessing their translation from page to stage.
Taught by: Malague and Schlatter
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 056
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 130 Introduction to Light, Set, and Costume Design
Design for theatre (and all of the performing arts) is a dynamic, collaborative process that engages both intellect and emotion in staging the dramatic moment. The personal vision of the designer must navigate the often-uncharted waters of the production process, from the earliest, personal moments of design inspiration to the opening night performance. Design flows from creativity, is structured by research and theory, and is realized in living form by collaboration in the dynamic process of theatre-making. This class will integrate history, theory and practice of stage design in the interactive setting of the Collaborative Classroom in Van Pelt Library in this special interdisciplinary, active-learning course offering open to all Penn students. Group and individual projects, field visits, practical projects and guest speakers will be featured in this newly-revised course. Prerequisite: Required of all Theatre Arts Majors
Taught by: Baratta
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Required of all Theatre Arts Majors

THAR 131 Concepts of Lighting
In this course we will cover the basic concepts of the art and craft of Stage Lighting Design. As a craft we will examine mechanics and technology of lighting design including light sources, power distribution, optics, and control. As an art we will explore how lighting ties together all the visual elements of a production and helps create an appropriate atmosphere that heightens the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the play. Topics include: what light is, what it does, and how light influences our perception and understanding of what we see. Exercises will help the student learn how to see and to understand how light shapes and affects the appearance people and objects on stage and in everyday life. Projects work will emphasize design theory and practice (design methods, script analysis, and drafting skills). Lighting design has its roots in the theatre. The theatre continues to be a prime training ground for lighting designers, no matter what their field.
Taught by: Whinnery
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 132 Costume
Costume history and design provides a framework for organized study and practice in this particular facet of theatre production. It is a one-semester course, scheduled to meet once a week for a three hour session.
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 133 Concepts of Stage Design
In this course we will cover the basic concepts of Scenic Design for the stage. Scene Design is about the look or physical appearance of the stage for a play. It reflects the way that the stage is composed artistically in regard to props, actors, shapes and color. We will explore Scene Design and the Theatre (story telling, place and local, time and period; society and culture), Scene Design as a Visual Art (principals of design and composition, style, use of space, expression of concept) and examine how it ties together all the visual elements of a production to create an appropriate atmosphere that heightens the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the play. Topics will include: Script Analysis, Technical Production, Period Decor and Ornament; Drawing, Drafting, Model Making; and Scene Painting.
Taught by: Whinnery
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 135 Theatrical Collaboration: Directors and Designers
This course aims to teach students the art and craft of theatrical collaboration between directors and designers. Through the study of effective collaborative practices and the examination of production case studies, students will learn theory they can put into practice not only in this course, but also in endeavors beyond the classroom. During the course's three major projects, students will bring the independent work of script analysis, dramaturgical research, and creative inspiration to the collective work of conceptual synthesis, design visualizations, and project proposal. Individually and together, students will learn and practice how to create the world of the play through physical space, character-defining costumes, visual representation, and styles of performance. While rotating through the roles of director, scenic designer, and costume designer, students will learn new technologies to foster expression and comprehension between and among team members, whether in-person or remote. The four plays examined in this course will require an exploration of the politics, social issues, and cultures of the period in which they are each written.
Taught by: Johnson, Malague
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 170 Voice for the Actor
This introductory course is designed to help the actor find new freedom and range of expression with their voice and to connect their voice to their impulse. Our focus on relaxation, sensitivity and awareness, using Fitzmaurice Voicework techniques inspired by yoga and meditation, help the student access and develop their own authentic sound. They will learn how to support their voice in a healthy way, with a view to longevity, spontaneity and flexibility of use. In this course, these kinds of vocal exercises will be applied to short, character monologues, in order to foster sensitivity to our voices and breath and to the habits and tensions we have formed around speaking in public. For an actor, reconnecting with their authentic voice is essential for an honest, connected and compelling performance. This training is also useful for anyone who wants to speak in public with confidence, sincerity and ease.
Taught by: Doherty
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisite: THAR 120
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 171 Movement for the Actor
The study of the art of bodily expression throughout history in theory and practice, from Classical and Oriental, African and Latin forms of dance and movement theater to the contemporary dance and theater, including mime, modern dance, post modern dance, physical theater, film, and performance art.
Taught by: Fischbeck
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 214 Advanced Playwriting
This course is intended to reinforce and build upon the areas covered in Level 1 Playwriting (THAR-114) so that students can refine the skills they’ve acquired and take them to the next level. Topics covered will include techniques for approaching the first draft, in-depth characterization, dramatic structure, conflict, shaping the action, language/dialogue (incl. subtext, rhythm, imagery, exposition etc), how to analyse your own work as a playwright, dealing with feedback, the drafting process, techniques for rewriting, collaboration (with directors, actors etc) and the ‘business of the art’ - working with theatres, agents, dramaturgs etc. Students will undertake to write their own one-act plays over the course. The classes will be a mixture of lecture, discussion, study of dramatic texts, writing exercises and in-class analysis of students’ work.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 154
Prerequisite: THAR 114
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 220 Advanced Acting
This course continues the work begun in the Introduction to Acting class. The specific focus of the course will be on helping students to connect more deeply and truthfully with each other on stage, freeing up the body of the actor to fulfill the physical demands of characterization, and analyzing the dramatic text to clarify objectives and focus action through unit breakdown. Attention will also be given to helping students work through specific problems and personal, creative obstacles. The basis of the course will be scene work taken from the twentieth-century repertoire (realist and non-realist plays), a classical monologue, and exercises taken from a variety of performance traditions. The course also includes readings from modern theorists and practitioners.
Taught by: Ferguson, Malague, Schlatter and O’Harra
Course not offered every year
Prerequisite: THAR 120
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 236 Topics in Renaissance Drama: Acting Shakespeare
This is a hands-on studio course designed to empower actors (and directors, designers and dramaturgs) to use the structure of Shakespeare’s language and the conventions of Shakespeare’s stage to build performance, using the skills and method of the contemporary actor. After the class works collectively on sonnets and speeches, all of the speech- and scene-work will be drawn from a single Shakespeare play (to be determined), with two reciprocal goals: to use the script to build the performance, and to use what we discover through performance to build an interpretation of the script. NOTE: the normal prerequisite for this course is THAR 120 or THAR 121 or their equivalents; but exceptions will be made by permission of he instructor.
Taught by: Mazer
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 236
Prerequisite: THAR 120 OR THAR 121
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This course is not open to freshmen. Instructor permission is required.

THAR 240 Advanced Topics in Theatre History
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basic materials and methods of theatre history and historiography, as applied to a particular topic, organized around a specific period, national group, or aesthetic issue. This course is concerned with methodological questions: how the history of theatre can be documented; how primary documents, secondary accounts, and historical and critical analyses can be synthesized; how the various components of the theatrical event—acting, scenography, playhouse architecture, audience composition, the financial and structural organization of the theatre industry, etc.—relate to one another; and how the theatre is socially and culturally constructed as an art form in relation to the politics and culture of a society in a particular time and place. Prerequisite: This class is the next level up from THAR 140 - Topics in Theatre History.
Taught by: Mazer
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 250 Theatre Workshop
This course will examine a specific aspect of theatrical practice, taught by a visiting professional theatre artist. The course, with different topics, may be repeated for credit. Recent topics have included performance art, Jacques LeCoq technique, Suzuki, and Viewpoints. Prerequisite: Crosslistings are contingent upon topics offered. For the current topics, contact the Theatre Arts office.
Taught by: Various Theatre Professionals
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 252 Collaborative Practices: Staging Projects Together
Do you want to develop a play or performance with others? Are you a theater designer, actor, or performer who wants to engage a project at each creative step from its early stages to its staging? Are you a writer who wants to engage the voices of actors and performers? Collaborative Practices is an ABCS course in which Penn students will build and hone their stage practices in collaboration with young artists and performers at a historic Philadelphia boarding school for academically capable students from families headed by a single parent or guardian. We will work closely with students at Girard College, a grade 1-12 school in Philadelphia, to create original theatrical and performance works together. Collaborative Practices offers models for staging original works in collaboration from start to finish and interrogates assumptions about collaboration inside a hands-on mentorship relationship. Penn students will have class on the Girard campus for 12 sessions and our work will culminate in a performance event at Girard College. Both seasoned and beginner theater and performance students are welcome.
Taught by: O’Harra
Also Offered As: ENGL 171
Activity: Studio
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 253 Performing Parables: Ragas and Sagas of the Sundarban
In this course writer Amitav Ghosh invites Penn students to engage his ongoing collaboration with the musician/performer Ali Sethi to stage his newest book Jungle Nama. Ghosh’s book Jungle Nama employs dwipdipoyer verse form and the popular folk tale of Bon Bibi the guardian spirit of the Sundarban to address the eroding ecosystem of the Sundarban. In this course students will work in a short intensive collaborative process with the artist to realize a lyric and musical performance of Jungle Nama. The class employs both academic research and performance methodologies to guide students through histories of traditional Indian performance and folk tales and a thorough examination of Ghosh’s source materials and influences (including studies of the Sundarban and its ecosystem). The course is co-taught with Director Brooke O’Harra. O’Harra, Ghosh and Sethi will lead students in a rigorous process of research, development and rehearsal, culminating in a public performance of a musical version of Jungle Nama. All levels and experience are welcome. Performance roles will be cast based on individual interests. In addition to performance roles, students will assume responsibility for other aspects of the process and production. In advance of registration, students are asked to audition and/or interview for the course depending upon initial interest. Actors, singers, dancers, musicians, artists and scholars are all encouraged to apply. Course specifics: The course will run until March 3 with an intensive 4-week rehearsal and development period that culminates in a live performance. Space is limited. Permission required.
Taught by: O’Harra
Also Offered As: ANTH 179, ENGL 149, FNAR 149, SAST 179
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 271 American Musical Theatre
The American musical is an unapologetically popular art form, but many of the works that come from this tradition have advanced and contributed to the canon of theatre as a whole. In this course we will focus on both music and texts to explore ways in which the musical builds on existing theatrical traditions, as well as alters and reshapes them. Finally, it is precisely because the musical is a popular theatrical form that we can discuss changing public tastes, and the financial pressures inherent in mounting a production. Beginning with early roots in operetta, we will survey the works of prominent writers in the American musical theatre, including Kern, Berlin, Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers, Hart, Hammerstein, Bernstein, Sondheim and others. Class lecture/discussions will be illustrated with recorded examples.
Taught by: Fox
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 271, ENGL 285
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 272 American Theatre and Performance
This course examines the development of the modern American theatre from the turn of the century to the present day. Progressing decade by decade the course investigates the work of playwrights such as Eugene O’Neill, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, David Mamet, August Wilson and Tony Kushner, theatre companies such as the Provincetown Players and the Group Theatre, directors, actors, and designers. Some focus will also be given to major theatrical movements such as the Federal Theatre Project, Off-Broadway, regional theatre, experimental theatre of the Sixties, and feminist theatre.
Taught by: Schlafter and Malague
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 273, ENGL 067
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 273 Dark Comedy in Theatre and Film
This course will examine the “troublesome genre” of dark comedy by looking at the ways in which theatre and film use comic and tragic structures and traditions to explore concepts and stories seemingly at odds with those traditions. Although not always organized chronologically in time, we will examine the formal and structural characteristics of tragicomedy by tracing its development, from some of its earliest roots in Roman comedy, to its manifestation in contemporary films and plays. Aside from close readings of plays and analysis of films, we will read selected critical essays and theory to enhance our understanding of how dark comedies subvert categories and expectations. We will look at how dark comedies affect audiences and read sections of plays aloud in class. Issues to be considered include comparing the way the genre translates across theatre and film (adaptation) and examining the unique placement of the genre at the heart of contemporary American culture. Students will have the opportunity to experiment with creating tragicomic effect through performance in their presentations. The class is a seminar, with required participation in discussions. Other assignments include an 8-10 page paper and a presentation. We will read plays by authors as diverse as Plautus, Anton Chekhov, and Lynn Nottage, and filmmakers including Charlie Chaplin, Sofia Coppola, and Bong Joon-ho.
Taught by: Ferguson
Also Offered As: CIMS 274, ENGL 014
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 274 Dramaturgy
This course will examine the functions and methods of the dramaturg—the person in the theatrical process who advises the artistic collaborators on (among other things) new play development, the structure of the script, the playwright's biography and other writings, the play's first production and its subsequent production history, and the historical and regional details of the period depicted in the plays action. We will study the history of the dramaturgy in the American theatre and discuss contemporary issues relating to the dramaturgy's contribution to the theatrical production (including the legal debates about the dramaturgy's contribution to the creation of RENT). And, in creative teams, the class will create dramaturgical portfolios for a season of imaginary (and, potentially, a few actual) theatrical productions.
Taught by: Mazer
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 225, ENGL 276, URBS 274
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 275 Advanced Topics in Theatre
This course will combine an intensive practical and intellectual investigation of some area of the making of theatre: performance techniques, theatrical styles, a particular period of theatre history. Please visit the Theatre Arts Program website for current topics for Thar 275 and other Theatre Arts Courses and special topics: https://theatre.sas.upenn.edu. Please visit the Theatre Arts Program website each semester for information on the available THAR 275 special topics courses: https://theatre.sas.upenn.edu. Prerequisite: This course, which may have different topics, be repeated for credit, will examine a specific aspect of theatrical practice. Recent topics have included performance art, Jacques Lecoq technique, improvisation, and puppetry.
Taught by: Fox, Ferguson, Malague, Mazer, O'Hara & Schlatter
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 225, ENGL 276, URBS 274
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 276 Women in Theatre and Performance
What is feminist theatre? How do artists use live performance to provoke not only thought and feeling, but also social, personal, and political change? This course will examine a wide array of plays and performances by and about women; these pieces are, in turn, serious, hilarious, outrageous, poignant—and always provocative. Our focus will be on English-language works from the late 20th century to the present (#metoo) moment. We will read these performance texts and/or view them on stage/screen; we will also read essays that provide contextual background on feminist theatre theory and history. Throughout the semester, we will engage diverse perspectives on women and race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender identity; the issues we encounter will also include marriage and motherhood, career and community, feminism and friendship, and patriarchy and power. The class will take full advantage of any related events occurring on campus or in the city, and will feature visits with guest speakers. Students will have the opportunity to pursue research on their own areas of interest (some recent examples are "women in comedy," trans performance, drag kings, feminist directing, etc.).
Taught by: Malague
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 303, GSWS 279
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 279 Dramaturgy
This course will examine the functions and methods of the dramaturg—the person in the theatrical process who advises the artistic collaborators on (among other things) new play development, the structure of the script, the playwright's biography and other writings, the play's first production and its subsequent production history, and the historical and regional details of the period depicted in the plays action. We will study the history of the dramaturgy in the American theatre and discuss contemporary issues relating to the dramaturgy's contribution to the theatrical production (including the legal debates about the dramaturgy's contribution to the creation of RENT). And, in creative teams, the class will create dramaturgical portfolios for a season of imaginary (and, potentially, a few actual) theatrical productions.
Taught by: Mazer
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 225, ENGL 276, URBS 274
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 278 Improvisation: History, Theory, Practice
With roots in Vaudeville, Commedia dell'Arte, and beyond, improvisatory theatre has a rich tradition of political, social and artistic subversions. In this course, we will both explore the history and theory of improvisation, and experiment with it in practice. Some classes will be devoted mainly to discussion of assigned readings and viewings, and some mainly to the practice of improvisation (there can be overlap between discussion and practice in any given class). Students are required to write a paragraph about all assigned readings on Canvas. Students are expected to come to each session fully prepared to discuss all assigned materials, and to participate in all exercises and improvisations. (Participants need to wear comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement.) Additional assignments are listed separately. Classes may occasionally deviate from the syllabus; in this case, advance notice will be given. The course features class visits from professional theatre artists with an expertise in improvisation and devised theatre, from whom students will learn a rich variety of traditions and techniques.
Taught by: Ferguson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 280 Improvisation: History, Theory, Practice
With roots in Vaudeville, Commedia dell'Arte, and beyond, improvisatory theatre has a rich tradition of political, social and artistic subversions. In this course, we will both explore the history and theory of improvisation, and experiment with it in practice. Some classes will be devoted mainly to discussion of assigned readings and viewings, and some mainly to the practice of improvisation (there can be overlap between discussion and practice in any given class). Students are required to write a paragraph about all assigned readings on Canvas. Students are expected to come to each session fully prepared to discuss all assigned materials, and to participate in all exercises and improvisations. (Participants need to wear comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement.) Additional assignments are listed separately. Classes may occasionally deviate from the syllabus; in this case, advance notice will be given. The course features class visits from professional theatre artists with an expertise in improvisation and devised theatre, from whom students will learn a rich variety of traditions and techniques.
Taught by: Ferguson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 281 Arts and Research Studio: Queer Archives, Aesthetics, and Performance
This course focuses on questions of how to represent the queer past, which it approaches from several angles: through training in archival methods and in scholarly debates about historiographical ethics (or, in the words of David Halperin, "how to do the history of homosexuality"); through engagement with the work of artists who make archives central to their practice; and through lab-based training that aims to represent encounters with queer history through embodied performance. Expectations: This course meeting weekly for 3 hours. But as you will see listed below (these activities and dates are not confirmed for this draft syllabus) the course includes and require that you attend a series of off-campus trips both in Philadelphia and to NYC that occur outside of the class schedule. Below is a list of archives we will visit, performances we will attend, and artists' studios we will visit for in-depth conversation with artist about their practice. The course will address both practical and theoretical issues raised by research in LGBT archives. We will take advantage of local resources in Philadelphia, including the John J. Wilcox Archives at the William Way Center (http://www.waygay.org/archives/). But we will also visit the Lesbian Herstory Archives (http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org/) and The Downtown Collection at the Fales Library at NYU (https://guides.nyu.edu/downtown-collection) and the Franklin Furnace Performance Archives (http://www.franklinfurnace.org), all in New York City. We will also bring artists to campus to work directly with students, and will meet with artists in New York. We will take advantage of the staging of Killjoy Kastle in Philadelphia in Fall 2019. This site-specific art installation, the work of Toronto artists Allyson Mitchell and Dierdre Logue, is a haunted house that addresses the difficult history of lesbian feminism, as well as its potential for contemporary LGBT politics. Since the Haunted House will include materials related to the history of feminist and LGBT activism in Philadelphia, students in the course can actively contribute to the research for this project.
Taught by: Love
Course offered fall; odd-numbered years
Also Offered As: ENGL 280
Activity: Studio
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 282 Theatre and Politics
This course will examine the relationship between theatre and politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. How do theatre artists navigate their artistic and political aims? How do we distinguish between art and propaganda? Throughout the semester we will ask how the unique components of theatre—its poetic structure, engagement with spectators, aesthetics of representation, relationship to reality, and rehearsal process—contribute to its political capacity. Students will read a variety of plays drawn from late twentieth century and contemporary global theatre practice alongside political and aesthetic theory to interrogate the relationship between artistic production, power, and resistance. We will conclude with a consideration of the ways politics is itself a performance, considering how power is supported by theatrical means and how performance functions in resistance movements.
Taught by: Thompson
Also Offered As: COML 285, ENGL 287
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 283 Backstage Drama in Theatre and Film
Inviting audiences into a special relationship with illusion, backstage dramas (whether on film or on stage) and plays-within-plays reach beyond and alongside traditional plot-driven narratives, to reflect on the process of representation itself. Drawing from classical debates about the relationships between reality, illusion, representation, and imitation (mimesis), we will examine a variety of plays and films as we articulate the complex network of responses and underlying assumptions (whether cultural, political, or social), about art and life, that these works engage.
Taught by: Ferguson
Course offered fall; odd-numbered years
Also Offered As: CIMS 283, ENGL 202
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 284 Icons in Performance: Actors and Others Who Have Shaped the Arts
Many talented performers bring works to life on a stage or in film. But a select few artists are so distinctive they become icons, defining for audiences—often for many years beyond their careers—the art they serve. Marlon Brando defined a new kind of American acting. Sidney Poitier broke the color barrier for leading man movie stars. Maria Callas showed that opera was equal parts theatre and music. Greta Garbo helped us understand the visual power of a film image. This seminar course will focus on iconic performers, directors and others, and the roles they play in defining their art forms. It is part analysis (interpreting in detail what it is these artists do) and part cultural study (why it matters, and also seeking to understand the larger circumstances at play in forging an icon). In addition to the performers mentioned above, we'll also study Mae West, Fred Astaire, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, and more. We will also look at a handful of iconic directors-including Alfred Hitchcock, Douglas Sirk, and others—whose style makes a definitive mark on American film and theater. And we will also look at how critics (in addition to popular audiences) assess performers through comparisons, and by understanding the evolution and tradition of the art. To support our work, we will use film, audio recordings, scripts, criticism and analytical essays, biography, and more.
Taught by: Fox
Also Offered As: CIMS 284, ENGL 289
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 286 Latin American and Latinx Theatre and Performance
This course will examine contemporary Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance from a hemispheric perspective. In particular, we will study how Latin American and Latinx artists engage with notions of identity, nation, and geo-political and geo-cultural borders, asking how we might study "national" theatres in an age of transnational globalization. Our consideration of plays, performances, and theoretical texts will situate Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance within the context of its politics, culture, and history.
Taught by: Thompson
Also Offered As: COML 286, ENGL 049, LALS 286
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 320 Scene Study
Scene Study is an advanced acting class that combines intensive script analysis with performance of scenes; material to be explored will be chosen specifically for the members enrolled in class. Open to students who have successfully completed Introduction to Acting (THAR120) and Introduction to Directing (THAR121). Students can take the course as actors, directors, or both. Each semester the course continues with greater emphasis on the actor's work with the text. We will study several plays together as a group, conducting Stanislavskian table work. We will then workshop and perform scenes from these plays in subsequent class sessions. In consultation with the instructor, students will identify individual goals, building on discoveries made in other Theatre Arts courses and/or prior stage work, exploring roles and plays that present actors with new challenges and expand their range. Depending on the number of students enrolled in the class, we are likely to perform at least three scenes and a monologue. Plays will be read alongside key theoretical texts, and class work will be complemented by attendance at selected live productions on campus and in Philadelphia.
Taught by: Malagé
Course usually offered in fall term
Prerequisite: THAR 120
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 321 Acting & Directing Lab
This course operates as a continuation of both Introduction to Acting (THAR120) and Introduction to Directing (THAR121). Students can take the course as actors, directors, or both. Each semester the course covers a unique topic of exploration for actors and directors. This is a studio class with a focus on scene work within various genres, styles and concentrations of theatrical practices. Some special topics might include: Japanese Theatre, Theatre as Event, Experimental Theatre, and Feminism and Form.
Taught by: O'Hara
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisite: THAR 120 OR THAR 121
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
THAR 350 Rehearsal and Performance
Theatre Rehearsal and Performance provides students with deep intellectual and artistic immersion in the theatrical process through intensive research, rehearsal, and performance of a full-length stage piece. Students may enroll in this course as actors (by audition only) or as assistant directors, stage managers, dramaturgs, or designers (by permission of the instructor). Each semester, the play will be featured in the Theatre Arts Program production season; the class meeting times will vary, but will typically consist of 16-20 hours per week in the evening hours.
Taught by: Ferguson, Fox, Malague, Mazer and Schlatter
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Studio
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 388 "Getting Caught": A Collaboration On and Off Stage Between Theater and Anthropology
Our workshop is an exploration of and a cross pollination between research and narrative practices in theater and anthropology. By creating a dialogue between these disciplines in a laboratory format, we hope to pose questions and engage techniques in ways that will enrich our engagement with anthropological questions and performative productions. We recognize the value of the work of Victor Turner, Richard Schechner, and Erving Goffman in their exploration between anthropology and performance studies. This is not, however, a workshop on the anthropology of theater nor an experiment in performing ethnographies, but rather a lab where we use theatrical techniques to engage empirical questions and material. Rather than enacting our research, we put the elements of the stage (lights, sets, objects, sound, bodies etc.) into conversation with our research material. This generates surprising and often more affective analyses. We explore how anthropologists can take from theater a more visceral posture towards research, and a more performative understanding of narrative that can translate into either a new kind of texts (essays, plays, short stories, installations, etc.), or into a revitalized existing practice of academic writing. On the other hand, theater makers and other artists can learn from anthropology a more nuanced understanding of political and cultural contexts, how to approach the different discourse formations around events and social issues, and to pay attention to the complexities of worlds and their grammars. We use the practice of Affect Theater. This theatrical devising technique is a practice for working with non-theatrical source material (interviews, archival documents, medical and legal reports, various media sources, etc.) to construct narratives for the stage. The practice of theatrical devising departs from traditional theater in that a finished script is not the starting point for the staging and direction of a play. Devising emerged as a means to revitalize how theatrical texts are created. It is a collaborative process involving the members of a company devising and writing together. Our workshop aims at extending this way of writing to other disciplines and their forms of textual production (books, articles, essays, installation, exhibits, etc.). We encourage participants to include their own empirical data as a part of the source material we utilize in our devising practices. This creates the opportunity for students and faculty to shift their relationship to their research through this collaborative engagement.
Taught by: Giordano
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 388, ANTH 588, FNAR 388, FNAR 588
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 485 Japanese Theater
Japan has an enormously rich and varied theatrical tradition. In this course, we will examine Japanese theatre in historical and comparative contexts.
Taught by: Kano
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: COML 385, EALC 255, EALC 655, FOLK 485
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 579 Provocative Performance
Taught by: Malague
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 456, GSWS 579
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

THAR 999 Graduate Level Independent Study
Course offered summer, fall and spring terms
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit