Theatre (Performance America), PhD

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Theatre (Theatre/Performance Americas)
The PhD in theatre with a concentration in theatre and performance of the Americas is a program that trains scholars to examine the histories, theories and practices associated with cultural performance from a hemispheric point of view.

Through coursework, seminars, research and study opportunities, doctoral students work from diverse critical perspectives that mobilize thought across geographical and disciplinary borders. They develop skills to reexamine and interrogate the canon of theatre as text and as performance, expanding the traditional boundaries of theatre studies in two ways: via a perspective that considers the shared histories and practices of theatre and performance in the Americas as central to an intervention in traditionally narrated histories and theories of theatre and via the methodologies of cultural and performance studies that accommodate other forms of embodied expression related to but distinct from formal theatrical expression.

The course of study is designed to provide substantive historical and theoretical grounding in the field while allowing flexibility in the choice of specialized seminar and practical experiences. The first year of study immerses students in the theoretical and practical groundwork of performance research, in general, and modalities of performance in the Americas, in particular. In the second year, students build on research interests identified in the first year through specialized coursework and practical experience.

At a Glance

- College/School: Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts
- Location: Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

90 credit hours, a foreign language exam, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Required Core (24 credit hours)
Electives (12 credit hours)

Research (12 credit hours)
THE 792 Research (12)

Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)
THE 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information
When approved by the student's supervisory committee and the Graduate College, this program allows 30 credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree to be used for this degree.

Two of the electives courses must come from outside the school, and they must be approved by the supervisory committee.

In meeting these requirements, students, with the advice of the supervisory committee, may select theatre courses in areas such as community-based theatre, dramaturgy, theatre for social change, theatre history, theatre theory and criticism, and related topics seminars.

Students also may take courses outside the School of Music, Dance and Theatre in areas such as critical and cultural studies, area studies, languages and literatures, and aesthetic theory. All activities are selected to help students meet the goals of the program and develop the capability of becoming leaders in the field.

Preliminary Reviews:
Reviews of the student's performance in courses and development of research skills, artistic skills and teaching competencies are conducted by the supervisory committee at the end of each semester.

Comprehensive Examinations:
Examinations are composed of written and oral components centering on theatre history, literature and criticism, theatre and performance of the Americas and the research area.

Dissertation Requirements:
A dissertation based on original high-quality research work demonstrating proficiency in the student's special field is required.

Admission Requirements
Applicants must fulfill the requirements of the Graduate College and the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts.
Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a master's degree in a relevant area from a regionally accredited institution.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's program and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. curriculum vitae
4. GRE scores
5. sample of scholarly writing
6. statement of purpose
7. three letters of recommendation from professionals familiar with the student's work
8. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency.

The statement of purpose should address the student's background and experiences as they relate to the student's reasons for pursuing the doctorate, and it should describe the student's research interests and indicate future career goals.

An interview is strongly recommended.

Students should see the program website for application deadlines.

Contact Information

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