

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

MFA in Acting

IOWA



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The University of Iowa Department of Theatre Arts is one of the oldest and most respected theatre programs in the country. We offer students the opportunity to earn an undergraduate BA degree or an MFA degree with an emphasis in acting, directing, design, playwriting, dramaturgy, or stage management.

Since its founding, the department has been committed to the collaborative process and the development of new plays. Each year at least 15 new works by graduate and undergraduate students are produced and another 25 new plays are presented as readings. We recognize that every play—new or old—is brought to life through the collaborative efforts of a writer, director, dramaturg, designers, actors, stage managers, and technicians. To support this process, we seek to create an atmosphere of artistic passion, openness, and generosity of spirit.

Some of our esteemed alumni include: David Adjmi, Rebecca Gilman, Kirsten Greenidge, Brian Quijada, Samuel D. Hunter, Lucas Ingram, Helen Kim, Cathy Parrott, Jen Silverman, Joniece Abbott-Pratt, Ethan Henry, and John William Watkins.



THE ACTING PROGRAM

The Master of Fine Arts in Acting at the University of Iowa combines rigorous professional training with an eclectic curriculum. The training immerses students in a variety of acting techniques, extensive movement and voice training, theatrical analysis, and digital media to develop emotionally available, responsive, and hyper-present artists equipped to meet the multifaceted creative and technical demands of the twenty-first century.

We seek curious and courageous individuals who are socially conscious, personally disciplined, and hungry for knowledge, with a commitment to challenging assumptions and breaking through boundaries. Most importantly, **we seek artistic collaborators who value self-exploration and possess lively imaginations and a thirst for play.**

The University of Iowa Acting MFA program admits students every three years, allowing faculty to focus their attention on individual students and their development throughout the training. Students admitted to the MFA program should have an undergraduate degree in theatre or equivalent training and experience.

There are three major components to the Acting MFA Program:

- **Course Work:** A Plan of Study totaling 72 semester hours forms the academic core of the program.
- **Practical Experience:** MFA actors are required to audition for the department's production season and to perform as cast. Every student is required to perform a minimum of one role each semester.
- **Teaching or Administrative Work:** Actors also teach courses in Basic Acting, Acting for Success, Drama in the Classroom, or Rhetoric—or serve in an administrative capacity, depending upon their skills. For this service they receive a salary, full tuition waiver, and health benefits.



PROGRAM DISTINCTIONS

- Actors work closely with the Iowa Playwrights Workshop to develop new scripts and participate in the Iowa New Play Festival, which premieres four new plays and four readings each year, created by MFA students and directed by MFA students and faculty.
- Guest artists frequently visit to lead workshops and discussions with acting MFA candidates. Recent guest artists include: Nambi E. Kelley, Daniel Carlton, Adam Belcoure, Kevin Augustine / Lone Wolf Tribe, Vanessa Stalling, The Movement Company, Martha Clark and and Welker White.
- Actors train in Motion Capture and Virtual Reality in a new, high-tech studio.

FACILITIES

- 460-seat E.C. Mabie proscenium theatre
- 144-215-seat David Thayer flexible black-box theatre
- 144-seat Alan MacVey proscenium theatre
- State-of-the-art rehearsal, design, and shop facilities
- Virtual Reality and Motion-Capture studios with three motion-capture systems, Nebula 3D projection scrim, green screen, and 360-degree immersive capabilities.

SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

- The Iowa Arts Fellowship is awarded to 1-2 incoming students in their first year, paying \$21,400 plus full tuition and benefits, during which they do not teach; an assistantship is provided the following years.
- Graduate assistantships require 10-20 hours of teaching per week. Salaries for 2022-23 ranged from \$10,299 to \$20,598.
- All MFA actors receive a tuition scholarship from the Graduate College.
- Numerous Department of Theatre Arts scholarships are awarded to students.
- Travel grants and research fellowships are available for conferences, training, and summer research through the department, college, and the university.



SCHEDULE A VISIT

with Paul Kalina, Head of Acting
paul-kalina@uiowa.edu



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→ [THEATRE.UIOWA.EDU](https://theatre.uiowa.edu)

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Photos by: Eric Bailey, Miranda Meyer, Alan Stoker, R. Eric Stone, and Mariana Tejada.

WHY IOWA?

450+

ARTS PERFORMANCES
AVAILABLE EACH YEAR TO
STUDENTS FOR \$5 OR LESS

#4

BEST COLLEGE TOWN IN
AMERICA - [REVIEWS.ORG](https://www.reviews.org)

100+

RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS,
MUSIC VENUES, THEATERS,
AND STREET FESTIVALS

112%

IOWA CITY RECEIVED A PERFECT
SCORE—PLUS EXTRA POINTS—FROM
THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN'S
ANNUAL LGBTQ+ EQUALITY
ASSESSMENT