



Admission Requirements

Admission for the Dramaturgy MFA is highly selective. The program currently enrolls 3 students for the degree and expects to maintain enrollment at this level.

We seek mature students with:

- a strong background in theatre history, theory, literature and/or related fields
- well-developed analytical and writing skills
- a demonstrated ability in collaborating with theatre artists
- a vision of how you might ultimately serve the American theatre as a dramaturg in the future

To be considered for admission into Stage Management Program, you must make sure you are aware of all of the deadlines and that you meet the minimum requirements for entry.

- [Graduate College Deadlines and Requirements](#)
- [International Student Admission Requirements](#)

Application Procedure

1. Submit an application and official transcript clearly indicating a final GPA of 3.00 or better to the Graduate College. The GRE exam is not required.
2. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email instructing you on how to upload your supporting documents and submit letters of recommendation. These will be uploaded from your Admissions Profile in MyUI, our online service center for applicants and students. You can only access this after you have submitted your application.

Supporting documents that will be uploaded to your Admissions Profile on MyUI:

- two samples of critical writing:
 - critical articles or essays on drama, theatre, or performance or
 - one sample of critical writing and one portfolio of work as a production dramaturg (e.g, research, program essays, study guides)
 - the writing samples should be long enough to demonstrate the candidate's capacity for sustained, cogent analysis of theatrical works

- the Admissions Committee also welcomes (but does not require) samples of dramatic writing which you deem relevant to your interest in the program's focus on the creation of new works
 - a resume of previous theatrical work, including experience as a dramaturg and in other theatrical disciplines
 - three letters of recommendation by individuals familiar with your academic and theatrical experience and potential
 - a personal statement (2-3 pages) detailing your personal, academic, and theatrical background, including your reasons for pursuing graduate study in dramaturgy and your professional goals after completing the MFA in Dramaturgy at Iowa.
3. If selected as a finalist for admission, the candidate will be interviewed by phone. On-campus interviews are not required. However, if a prospective candidate visits Iowa City, he or she is welcome to meet with our students and us.

All MFA dramaturgs receive a tuition scholarship from the Graduate College, which offsets the amount of the current tuition. General fees are not included in this scholarship. Additionally, all MFA dramaturgy hold paid teaching or research assistantships. Departmental scholarships also may be awarded, with the amounts varying on an annual basis.

Formal Instruction

The MFA Program in Dramaturgy requires a minimum of 64 semester-hours of coursework in three areas: the MFA Core Curriculum (Orientation to Graduate Studies and Theatrical Analysis); Playwrights Workshop, Dramaturgy Practicum, and Dramaturgy Seminar; and elective coursework in theatre history, literature, and theory. Although you must fulfill particular course requirements, each plan of study is individualized in consultation with the Head of Dramaturgy. In addition to developing expertise in traditions of Western theatre, you are encouraged to situate your work in the context of nontraditional and non-Western forms. In the final year of enrollment, you are required to complete a thesis that represents their dramaturgical philosophy and its application to theatre practice.

While coursework in history, literature, and theory is essential to the program, so is the development of applied skills in dramaturgical research, analysis, and collaboration, through which you draw on their knowledge and skills in helping facilitate the creation of works for the stage. You are required to serve as dramaturgs in the Playwrights Workshop, the principal course of the MFA Program in Playwriting, and on the annual New Play Festival, a weeklong series of productions and readings developed by MFA playwrights in collaboration with students across department programs.

You are also expected to serve as production dramaturgs on the department's Mainstage and Gallery productions. For interested students, there are production opportunities with our Summer

Partnership in the Arts and with our department's companion units in the Division of Performing Arts - the Department of Dance and the School of Music.

In the first semester of enrollment, you must complete a Plan of Study in consultation with the Head of Dramaturgy, who serves as the student's academic advisor, and normally as the thesis advisor. The Plan of Study should indicate all required and elective courses you expect to take in completing the MFA. The Plan of Study should also indicate any graduate transfer credit to be counted towards the degree; whether or not transfer courses may substitute for department or program requirements; and any coursework you must take in order to fill gaps in his/her previous academic preparation.

Your Graduate Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies must approve the Plan of Study. For MFA candidates in Dramaturgy, the Graduate Committee will normally consist of Professors Borreca, Mahone and Marra. If appropriate, an additional faculty member outside Dramaturgy may be chosen in consultation with the advisor. Once it has been established, the Head of Dramaturgy and the Director of Graduate Studies must approve any changes in the make-up of your Graduate Committee.

In addition to approving the Plan of Study, the Committee's responsibilities include: approving any subsequent changes to the Plan (in consultation with the DGS); overseeing your academic progress and your development as a dramaturg; providing feedback on department dramaturgical work; approving your satisfactory completion of the second-year review, including all components of the Comprehensive Exam (described below); advising and approving the MFA Thesis in the third year.

All major elements of the program—academic coursework, Workshop and Practicum, production dramaturgy—are interdependent in your progress and development. Concerns about your progress are discussed in regular conferences with and reviews by the faculty.

Typical Plan of Study

All MFA candidates in Dramaturgy must complete a minimum of 65 semester hours and all of the following:

Orientation to Graduate Studies	1 sh
Classical to Romantic Theatre	3 sh
Modern Drama	3 sh
Postmodern Theatre	3 sh
Dramatic Theory	3 sh
Special Topics in Playwriting: Structural Approaches	3 sh
At least two electives in history/literature/theory taken in the Dept. of Theatre Arts	6 sh
At least one course in performance studies	3 sh

Playwrights Workshop (6 Semesters)	18 sh
Dramaturgy Practicum (6 semesters: 3 sh Fall + 1s.h. Spring x 3 = 12 sh)	12 sh
New Play Dramaturgy	3 sh
At least one of the following:	
Guest Seminar	3 sh
A course in playwriting, screenwriting, directing, or collaboration	
MFA Thesis (taken in the third year of enrollment)	3 h

Notes:

Classical to Romantic Theatre may be waived for students who TA for Theatre and Society: Ancients and Modern or History of Theatre and Drama. If waived, a substitute course in history/literature/theory, preferably pre-modern, must be taken.

Adjustments to the requirements above may be made for students studying a foreign language.

Dramaturgy Practicum

In every semester of your enrollment, you take Dramaturgy Practicum, through which your dramaturgical work in Playwrights Workshop and on department productions is supervised. In the fall, the course also focuses on a special topic in dramaturgy, such as Dramatic Criticism, Dramaturgical Criticism, and Writing the Dramaturgical Process; and provides opportunities to practice such skills as script reporting, program notes and essays, and study guides.

Playwrights Workshop & Graduate Playwriting Courses

MFA Dramaturgs are required to enroll in THTR:7300 Playwrights Workshop for a total of 18 semester hours of credit over six semesters of enrollment. For fulfilling all dramaturgical responsibilities and assignments outlined in the Workshop syllabus, students receive a full 3-semester hours course credit.

Depending on the subject-matter and focus of the course, Dramaturgy students may be permitted to enroll in THTR:6310 Special Topics in Playwriting. At the discretion of the playwriting faculty, you may also be permitted to present plays in Playwrights Workshop during one or more semesters.

Normally, only MFA playwriting students may submit scripts for Festival and may enroll for THTR:6300 Guest Seminar. Exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the playwriting faculty. Selected workshops of the Guest Seminar provide non-credit opportunities for dramaturgy students to work in collaboration with playwrights and other MFA students.

Production Requirements

In addition to required coursework, you must complete the following during each year of enrollment:

- Two production dramaturgy assignments to be assigned from among department Mainstage and Gallery productions. With the consent of the Head of Dramaturgy, you may substitute projects outside the department in the Division of Performing Arts to fulfill this requirement.
- Annual dramaturgical work on productions and readings of the New Play Festival.

The **Co-Heads of Dramaturgy make** all dramaturgy assignments in consultation with the Director of Theatre and the directors and playwrights involved. Your preferences are taken fully into account in this process.

You may earn up to 12 hours of credit in your second and third years for work on Mainstage and Gallery productions.

Guidelines for Production Dramaturgy

In your work as production dramaturgs, you are expected to carry out research and analysis that help to facilitate the director's interpretation and conceptualization of the play, and to serve as a critical advisor to the director throughout the rehearsal process. In the case of new plays, the dramaturg is expected to consult closely with the playwright on each draft of the play, and on rewrites made during rehearsals. You should take detailed dramaturgical notes at all meetings and rehearsals attended, amassing the material for a potential dramaturg's casebook on the production.

When and how often you should attend rehearsals varies with the director, playwright, and project. However, with both established texts and new plays, you should normally attend at least the following: the first read-through and all "table work," run-throughs of acts or large segments of the play, and final runs and dress rehearsals.

Depending on the production, you may also be responsible for writing a program essay and/or compiling other program materials, preparing or assisting in the preparation of a study guide for school groups, moderating post-performance discussions with audiences, creating lobby displays, and serving (along with the stage manager) as a liaison between the production, the department, and the Division of Performing Arts Marketing Department.

Thesis

You must complete an MFA Thesis during the final year of enrollment, to be submitted in the final semester. The thesis should consist of a significant piece of dramaturgical research that, with subsequent revision and editing, would be publishable in a journal of dramaturgy, history, theory, or criticism.

All theses should aim to bridge theory and practice and may take one of the following forms. (Page length necessarily varies with the subject and form of the thesis and will be determined by the Graduate Committee at the time of your thesis proposal.)

A research paper in theatre history, literature, theory, or criticism that has specific application to the work of the dramaturg and the dramaturgical process.

A paper that documents and analyzes the development and production of a department work on which you have served as dramaturg. The paper should incorporate elements of a dramaturg's protocol or casebook and should structure those elements into a cohesive analysis of the dramaturgical process on the work.

A new play, translation, or adaptation, supplemented by a critical introduction and other dramaturgical materials to be determined in consultation with the advisor. This option is for those students with demonstrated skills and experience in playwriting or translation.

Based on the subject of the thesis, you should request a member of your Committee to serve as the primary thesis advisor. However, you should seek the advice of all members of the Committee in the research and writing of the thesis. If appropriate, you may request that a fourth member of the Theatre Arts or Graduate College faculty with relevant expertise serve on the Committee.

Between the First and Final Deposit to the Graduate College, you must meet with your Committee to complete a 1 1/2 hour oral defense of the thesis. In the defense, you will be expected to discuss the thesis in relation to your coursework and departmental work as a dramaturg.

Accelerated Degree Policy

Accelerated degree status may be granted for graduate transfer credit that satisfies particular course requirements AND/OR for professional experience, which the faculty accept as equivalent to program requirements. In the Dramaturgy Program, accelerated degree status for previous professional work will be granted only to students with a significant record of professional production dramaturgy which reflects, in the view of the faculty, advanced achievement in the theatre.

Usually 9 to 12 semester hours of graduate coursework from another institution (1 full-time semester) will be applied to the MFA in Playwriting at Iowa, including the waiver of one semester of Playwrights Workshop. Accelerated degree status based on professional experience may include the waiver of up to two semesters of course requirements.

If you believe you might qualify for accelerated degree status, you should seek the advice of the Head of Dramaturgy either at the time of admission or in the first semester of enrollment. Applications for accelerated degree status will normally be reviewed and approved or denied in the same semester in which they are made.

See also the Department Accelerated Degree Policy (Under Academic Procedures).