

MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

MFA-511 Acting 1 (3 credits)

Acting 1 is a studio course that cultivates awareness through observation, exploration, and imagination. Students will deepen their relationship to self and others through investigation of how stories and meaning are exchanged utilizing principles of improvisation, play, and storytelling.

MFA-512 Acting 2 (3 credits)

Acting 2 focuses on acting techniques for the awareness and performance of heightened text, including scripts and scores that are more formal, poetic, or expressive. Students will examine texts from the classical canon to contemporary work in order to develop the critical, creative, and technical skills for crafting authentic, imaginative characters outside the realm of realism.

Prerequisite(s): Take MFA-511

MFA-521 Voice and Speech 1 (3 credits)

Voice and Speech 1 establishes a foundation for using the natural voice to its fullest capacity. The focus of the course is to build confidence through increased somatic and cognitive understanding of the vocal instrument. Through an examination of the mechanics of voice, centering on breath, resonance, tone, flexibility, and support, students will learn the tools for building a fully embodied vocal instrument.

MFA-522 Voice and Speech 2 (3 credits)

Voice and Speech 2 deepens the exploration of the vocal instrument begun in Voice 1, with a focus on clarity and quality of sound and vocal analysis of text in the context of creating character and story. Coursework includes study of the International Phonetic Alphabet, script analysis, and musicality.

Prerequisite(s): Take MFA-521

MFA-531 Movement/Physical Awareness 1 (3 credits)

Movement and Physical Awareness 1 is designed to increase the students' kinesthetic awareness of themselves and the world around them. This course introduces the fundamentals of an embodied acting technique, which challenges the Cartesian dualism that often dominates American acting styles. Practical exercises support coursework aimed at activating the student's connection between mind, body, and emotion as foundational to their work as a theater practitioner.

MFA-532 Movement/Physical Awareness 2 (3 credits)

Movement and Physical Awareness 2 focuses on the actor's understanding of the mind-body connection in the creation of character. In this course, students expand their kinesthetic and physical vocabularies to investigate how the body tells a story. Practical exercises aim to increase the actor's plasticity for comprehensive and sustained performance.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-531 Movement/Physical Awareness 1

MFA-541 Professional Seminar 1 (3 credits)

Professional Seminar explores the performing arts industry through targeted examination of contemporary practices and applications for the artist. ProSem prepares students to be critical thinkers, advanced communicators, and savvy artists through deeper dives into content and experiential learning in and through the arts. Topics may include: advocacy, script analysis, theater history, teaching artistry, community engagement, applied theater, arts administration, professional development, and/or relevant contemporary concerns.

MFA-542 Professional Seminar 2 (3 credits)

Professional Seminar explores the performing arts industry through targeted examination of contemporary practices and applications for the artist. ProSem prepares students to be critical thinkers, advanced communicators, and savvy artists through deeper dives into content and experiential learning in and through the arts. Topics may include: advocacy, script analysis, theater history, teaching artistry, community engagement, applied theater, arts administration, professional development, and/or relevant contemporary concerns.

MFA-551 Dramatic Works Laboratory (3 credits)

An experiential learning course that involves exploration of theatrical hypotheses about the nature, purpose, and application of the dramatic arts in our local and global communities. In Drama Lab, students experiment through the creation and development of dramatic performance as individuals and as an ensemble.

MFA-552 Dramatic Works Laboratory 2 (3 credits)

An experiential learning course that involves exploration of theatrical hypotheses about the nature, purpose, and application of the dramatic arts in our local and global communities. In Drama Lab, students experiment through the creation and development of new works as individuals and an ensemble.

MFA-561 Script Analysis (3 credits)

Since the first plays were performed in the 5th century B.C.E., human beings have expressed the greatest depths of human emotion, experience, and conflict in the art of theater. This class is designed to help students develop the skills of close-reading drama as both a literary and a theatrical art form with its own methods for creating meaning. Readings, discussions, writing, and performance assignments will help students build their understanding of how playwrights create meaning while also opening interpretive choices for actors and audiences.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-541 Dramaturgy

MFA-562 Dramaturgy (2 credits)

Since the first plays were performed in the 5th century B.C.E., human beings have expressed the greatest depths of human emotion, experience, and conflict in theater. This class is designed to help students develop the skills to identify and interpret a variety of styles and types of drama from a diverse range of global backgrounds and ethnic, racial, gender, and sexual identities; an understanding of the historical, cultural, and political contexts that shaped these plays; and the ability to engage in close reading, understanding how playwrights create meaning, while also leaving interpretive choices for actors and audiences. Class time will include both discussion and brief student performances of the plays being read, giving students the opportunity to explore these texts with their bodies and voices as well as their minds.

MFA-563 Theater and Society (3 credits)

Theater can be an incendiary device for revolution, a tool for critical reflection, and a practice of critical resistance. In this course, students will explore the radical potential of theater and performance to effect positive social and political change in the world and in their own communities. We will consider theater artists and movements focused on the potential of performance to effect social change. Students will investigate the ways in which theater has served as a forum to rethink and rehearse notions of community, citizenship, justice, power, authority, and responsibility. Readings and projects will explore what forms and examples of theater best inspire political action; which tactics have had the greatest impact; and in what ways performance might intervene in contemporary crises at home and abroad. Students will experiment with developing scripts and performances based on current events and may collaborate with community groups on performative projects.

MFA-611 Acting 3 (3 credits)

Acting 3 is a studio course that focuses on the preparation of a role for performance. This course discusses the questions, choices, and methodologies of an actor in production, centering the text as the blueprint for action. Students are challenged through exercises and advanced scene work to expand their transformative range to build authentic, believable, supported characters and story.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-512 Acting 2

MFA-612 Acting 4 (3 credits)

Acting 4 explores how performers can utilize knowledge and technique to craft story across genres and medium. Whether with a new script or no script, on a stage or behind a camera, the skilled artisan can flexibly and fluidly apply their skills to any given circumstances. This semester students focus on the process and possibilities of adaptation in theater.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-611 Acting 3

MFA-621 Voice and Speech 3 (3 credits)

Voice and Speech 3 continues study of the artist's instrument with a focus on the transformative power of sound and the sound of transformation. This course dives deeper into the study and application of dialect as well as the use of dramatic digressions such as choral ode, song, or even silence.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-522 Voice and Speech 2

MFA-622 Voice and Speech 4 (3 credits)

Voice and Speech 4 studies how artists apply their skills in other media including voice over, film, and public speaking. This course expands on the training of Voice 1-3 to broaden the possibility of performance and storytelling through vocal technique.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-621 Voice and Speech 3

MFA-631 Movement/Physical Awareness 3 (3 credits)

Movement and Physical Awareness 3 is a studio course that looks at the relationship between form and content in the creation of meaning. Students explore how theatricality of physical elements including body, space, and environment communicate stories that move us emotionally, viscerally, and sensorially. The focus this course is on physical storytelling.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-532 Movement/Physical Awareness 2

MFA-632 Movement/Physical Awareness 4 (3 credits)

Movement and Physical Awareness 4 is a studio course focused on group and ensemble movement including composition, staging, and choreography. Through exercises and practical coursework, students synthesize their knowledge of acting, design, movement, and musicality in the exploration of physical storytelling on the macro level.

Prerequisite(s): MFA-631 Movement/Physical Awareness 3

MFA-641 Professional Seminar 3 (3 credits)

Professional Seminar explores the performing arts industry through targeted examination of contemporary practices and applications for the artist. ProSem prepares students to be critical thinkers, advanced communicators, and savvy artists through deeper dives into content and experiential learning in and through the arts.

MFA-642 Professional Seminar 4 (3 credits)

Professional Seminar explores the performing arts industry through targeted examination of contemporary practices and applications for the artist. ProSem prepares students to be critical thinkers, advanced communicators, and savvy artists through deeper dives into content and experiential learning in and through the arts.

MFA-643 Professional Seminar 5 (3 credits)

Professional Seminar courses provide an opportunity for students to engage in master classes with theater professionals who are experts in their craft. These classes are designed to be interactive and immersive in areas of specialized focus. Students will gain exposure to and concentrated engrossment in areas of outside of, but complementary to, the cohesive program curriculum.

MFA-644 Professional Seminar 6 (3 credits)

Professional Seminar courses provide an opportunity for students to engage in master classes with theater professionals who are experts in their craft. These classes are designed to be interactive and immersive in areas of specialized focus. Students will gain exposure to and concentrated engrossment in areas of outside of, but complementary to, the cohesive program curriculum.

MFA-651 Dramatic Works Laboratory 3 (3 credits)

An experiential learning course that involves exploration of theatrical hypotheses about the nature, purpose, and application of the dramatic arts in our local and global communities. In Drama Lab, students experiment through the creation and development of dramatic performance as individuals and as an ensemble.

MFA-652 Production 4 (3 credits)

Students will be involved in a Kavinoky Theatre production in some capacity. Students will understudy at least one role during their 2-year program and will be in at least one substantial role during their candidacy. Other opportunities in production may be, but are not limited to, apprenticeship in: Design/Tech; Directorial; Stage Management; Administrative/Box Office; House Management. Performance or apprentice opportunities outside of Kavinoky Theatre in partnership with other WNY professional theatres.

MFA-661 Colab Colloquial (2 credits)

This course is designed to deepen the understanding of the collaborative efforts required in the creation and production of theater.

MFA-662 History and Dramaturgy of Musical Theater (2 credits)

This course addresses the existing literature of musical theater with a special focus on diversity and inclusion. We will focus not only on the books and scores but also on how artists influence and impact interpretations and change.

MFA-690 Creative Thesis Project (3 credits)

Creative Thesis Project is the capstone for Dramatic Arts MFA students, which synthesizes their creative research and activity in a public presentation of their work. The Project demonstrates the culmination of skills and training over the course of the program, as well as the student's artistic vision and perspective. The Creative Thesis Project showcases their control of craft and, ultimately, their artistry.