Center for Career & Professional Development

Major Possibilities: Theatre

Quick Facts

- The Theatre Department at Southwestern University provides a rigorous program of study in theatrical design, performance, and playwriting, balanced with a solid and comprehensive foundation in theatre history, theory, and literature grounded in Southwestern University’s liberal arts tradition.
- Students who graduate from Southwestern University with a degree in theatre are well prepared for graduate schools and advanced theatre training programs and for work in the professional theatre.
- The Theatre Department puts on a variety of productions, including Heathers, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Noises Off, Silent Sky, A Bright Room Called Day, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, actors endure long periods of unemployment, intense competition for roles, and frequent rejections in auditions. Many actors supplement their income with other jobs, although a select few have extraordinarily high earnings. Formal training through a university or acting conservatory is typical; however, many actors, producers, and directors find work on the basis of their experience and talent alone.
- Internships and apprenticeships help shape professional identities, develop 21st century career-readiness skills, and make meaning of the academic experience.

Theatre Major Synopsis

The theatre major is designed to provide students with a solid grounding in all areas of theatre studies including history, dramatic literature, performance, and design and production practices. Many students who major in theatre have minors or double majors because they have other major intellectual or disciplinary interests, or they choose to pursue teacher certification. Students who wish to be successful in theatre performance or production should participate in acting workshops and seminars and join guilds in the area of theatre they are interested in. They should also have as much practical experience as possible. Theatre majors are required to audition for all Southwestern University main stage productions for either an acting role or a production staff role.

Sample Job Titles

ARTS, MEDIA, AND ENTERTAINMENT
- Actor/Actress
- Acting Coach
- Advertising Specialist
- Announcer
- Art Director
- Broadcaster
- Casting Director
- Choreographer
- Comedian
- Costume Design
- Critic
- Director
- Display Designer
- Entertainer
- Event Planner
- Exhibit Designer
- Journalist
- Lighting Designer
- Lighting Operator
- Make-up Artist
- Marketing Specialist
- Media
- Playwright
- Planner/Salesperson
- Prop Manager
- Rigger/Puppeteer
- Scene Painter
- Set Designer
- Set Draftsman
- Sound Designer/Engineer
- Stage Manager
- Stunt Coordinator
- Writer/Editor

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE
- Art Director
- Booking Manager
- Business Manager
- Community Affairs Specialist
- Manager
- Marketing Executive
- PR Specialist
- Sales Representative
- Special Events Coordinator
- Theatre Manager
- Ticket Sales Coordinator
- Training Developer

GOVERNMENT, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION
- Arts Organization Consultant
- Dance Instructor
- Campaign Manager
- Preservation
- Military Music Leader
- Press Secretary
- Teacher
- University Professor
Sample Internship Employers of SU Students

- Aftershock (London, UK)
- Alliance for International, Educational, & Cultural Exchange (Washington, DC)
- Arden Theatre Company (Philadelphia, PA)
- Austin Film Festival (Austin, TX)
- Barrington Stage Company (Pittsfield, MA)
- Brock Allen Casting (Austin, TX)
- Charing Cross Theater (London, UK)
- Chicken Shed Theatre (London, UK)
- Child’s Play Touring Theatre (Chicago, IL)
- Dallas Theatre Center (Dallas, TX)
- Georgetown Roundup Studio (Georgetown, TX)
- Glimmerglass Opera (Cooperstown, NY)
- Houston Guild Theatre (Houston, TX)
- Juilliard Professional Intern Program (New York, NY)
- Kitchen Theatre Company (Ithaca, NY)
- Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (New York, NY)
- New York Shakespeare Festival (New York, NY)
- Pioneer Amphitheatre (Canyon, TX)
- Playhouse on the Square (Memphis, TN)
- Searchography (Austin, TX)
- SOHO Theatre Company Limited (London, UK)
- ‘stache Media (New York, NY)
- St. Helen Catholic School (Georgetown, TX)
- Strasberg Institute (New York, NY)
- The Ensemble Theatre (Houston, TX)
- The Kennedy Center (Washington, DC)
- ZACH Theater (Austin, TX)
- Zilker Hillside Theatre (Austin, TX)

Sample Full-Time Employers of SU Students

- Actor (California Theatre Center, New Stage Theatre, et.al.)
- Artistic Development (Manhattan Theatre Club)
- Artistic Director (Out of Context Productions, LLC)
- Assistant Director (Hyde Park Theater)
- Assistant Master Electrician (PA Shakespeare Festival)
- Audio-Visual Technician (Celebrity Cruise Lines)
- Carpenter (Utah Festival Opera)
- Casting Assistant (HH Talent & Entertainment)
- Conference Manager (Austin Film Festival)
- Costume Shop Manager (Theatre l’Homme Dieu)
- Entertainer (Walt Disney World, Orlando)
- Executive Director (Out of Context Productions, LLC)
- General Management Assistant (McCarter Theater)
- Health Volunteer (Peace Corps)
- Kitchen Designer/Sales Specialist (Lowe’s Home Improvement)
- Lighting Designer (Sea World, Tri-State Actors Theatre)
- Lighting Technician (Chamber Theatre Productions)
- Marketing Director (Lafayette Community Health Care Clinic)
- Musical Director (Kids Acting Theater)
- Performance Arts Instructor (Dougherty Arts Center)
- Properties Assistant (Dallas Theatre Center)
- Production Assistant (NY Theatre Workshop)
- Production Manager (TexArt)
- Scenic Designer (Stagedoor Manor)
- Stage Manager (Barrington Stage Co.)
- Student Affairs Advisor (Center for Academic Programs Abroad)
- Teacher (Teach for America, Hutto ISD)
- Teaching Artist (Guadeloupe Cultural Arts Center)
- Theatre Teacher (La Vernia ISD)
- Wardrobe (Mac-Haydn Theatre)

Professional Associations

- Actors’ Equity Association
- American Association of Community Theatre
- American Dance Therapy Association
- Directors Guild of America
- The Episcopal Actors’ Guild
- Pioneer Drama Service

- Playwrights Guild
- Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
- Society of Health and Physical Educators (including dance)
- Texas Nonprofit Theatres