Theater

Overview

As a theater major at Connecticut College, you are immersed in the art, craft, and theory of theater – acting, directing, design, technical theater, playwriting, dramaturgy, and dramatic literature. We have three theater spaces on campus, and the creative process of making theater is happening in at least one of them at any given moment. The liberal arts offer limitless ways for you to explore connections with other disciplines that will enrich your theater studies. You develop a strong working relationship with your professors. They direct and critique your performances, and are available for ongoing consultation and discussion. At Connecticut College, theater is an investigation that inspires you intellectually and creatively, and the working relationships you build can last well beyond your time on campus.

Performances and Productions

You can participate in our main stage productions as well as in independent productions sponsored by the department or by student groups. Works recently staged include “Cloud Nine;” “Detroit;” “As You Like It;” “Four Dead in Ohio: Antigone at Kent State,” an ensemble-adaptation created by the students; and “Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel,” a collaboration with the departments of music and dance. As a senior, you may choose to work with a faculty mentor on a one-semester capstone project or a two-semester honors study in writing, performing, directing or design. The project represents the culmination of your college study of theater and may serve as a starting point for future work.

Special Opportunities

You have many opportunities to intern at regional or New York theaters, study abroad and collaborate with guest artists in acting, directing, design, playwriting, and dramaturgy. Students have completed summer internships at the nearby Eugene O’Neill Theater Center as well as the Pearl Theatre, the Signature Theatre, The Public Theater, and the New York Theater Workshop, all in New York City. In your junior year, you can study at theater institutes in the U.S. or abroad. Recently, students have gone to Moscow, Italy and Ireland.

Teresa Cruz
Theater, Psychology

Q: Why Connecticut College?
A: Conn is not a campus that you have to learn to love and I knew from my first tour that I could find a place here where I would be nurtured and appreciated.

Q: What led you to the theater major?
A: I have always been captivated by storytelling and having never taken a formal theater class before, I wanted to push myself into unknown territory as I entered college. I was immediately struck by the collaborative nature of the craft and the experience and possibility that is inherent in live performance.

Q: Your most challenging or rewarding class?
A: I took “American Drama” with Ken Prestininzi the first semester of my sophomore year. We were reading 3-5 plays a week and the full immersion in theater (varying in content and structure) allowed me to build my language in responding to theater, as well as my critical understanding of the work and my enthusiasm for the art.

Q: Types of research you have done?
A: I am a board member and artistic director of Wig & Candle, the small, but hungry, student-run theater company. We produce around 5-6 productions and events each semester, giving stage to any and all Conn students. Through Wig & Candle, I have had the humbling opportunity to direct three plays in my time here. These projects put what I learned from my professors into action, allowing me to find my own voice. In my senior year, I assisted director Ken Prestininzi on his production of “Cloud 9” by Caryl Churchill, an experience of close observance and attentive assistantship. Lastly, I directed “Mud” by María Irene Fornés, featuring three talented peers, as my cumulative Theater Senior Capstone project.

Q: What are your career plans?
A: The career office has helped me better understand a way to make room for yourself in the professional world. They helped me reach out to theater communities and find opportunities that gave me a starting point. After graduation, I’m going to Berkeley, California, to take part in an ambassadorship at the Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep.
Faculty

Virginia (Ginny) Anderson, Assistant Professor of Theater
B.A. Carleton College; M.A., Stanford University; M.A., Goldsmiths College, University of London; Ph.D., Tufts University
Theater history; LGBT theater; women's theater; children's theater; the AIDS Epidemic in theater and film

David Jaffe, Professor of Theater; Chair of Theater Department
B.A., Connecticut College; National Theater Institute, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center; Actors Theater of Louisville Apprentice Company; M.F.A., Yale University
Actor training; collectively created performance; theatrical adaptation; the works of Anton Chekhov

Kenneth Prestininzi, Associate Professor of Theater
B.S., Northwestern University; M.F.A., University of Iowa
Playwriting; creative ensemble; performance studies; theater history and literature

Sabrina Notarfrancisco, Assistant Professor of Theater
B.A., University of Central Florida; M.A., Southwest Missouri State University; M.F.A., University of Connecticut
Costume design; costume history; costume construction

Selected Courses

- Acting I: Preparation; Acting II: Play Analysis; Playwriting Workshop; Directing One: Coaching the Actor; American Drama; The Solo Performance Event; The AIDS Epidemic in Theater and Film; Theories Of Performance; Theater and Culture: Rise from Ritual; Advanced Acting: Shakespeare; Advanced Acting: The Realists; Musical Theater in American Culture

About Connecticut College

Connecticut College educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society. A leader in the liberal arts since 1911, the College is home to nationally ranked programs for internships, community action, arts and technology, environmental studies and international studies. Our beautiful 750-acre arboretum campus is located in the historic New England seaport community of New London, Conn.

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