

STUDENT HANDBOOK

*with specialized appendices for
the BFA Design and Production Program,
the BFA Acting Program, &
the BFA Dramaturgy Program and the MFA Playwriting
Program.*

FALL 2024/SPRING 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 Academic year and our most recent version of the Student Handbook! I'm excited to take on the role of Chair this year, and I look forward to welcoming back returning students, meeting new students, and working more closely with faculty and staff, both returning and new. Working together, we can create a safe, inclusive, and productive community that extends into all our classrooms, shops, rehearsals, and productions.

The goal of this handbook is to be an easy guide and reference for you throughout the school year. There are often many questions of where to go for this service or what the protocols are for accessing or navigating something else. This handbook is here to help provide answers or to point you in the right direction to find assistance.

We have organized this Handbook into three sections: The first section addresses more general policies and operations of the university, school, and department. The second discusses specific information regarding productions and class policies, and the third section is to help navigate some of the artistic and academic policies and procedures for your time in our program.

In addition to this general handbook, we have three appendices that address more specific concerns: 1) Design & Production Concentrations, 2) Acting Concentration, and 3) BFA Dramaturgy & MFA Playwriting.

This handbook and its appendices exist to give us guidance, but know that this is a living document, which is updated and amended every year. Therefore, even if you are in your final semester and think you know it all, please take a moment to refamiliarize yourself with the information contained here and see what's new. Everything included is intended to support your growth and give direction as we all engage in becoming our best selves, learning in cooperation the process of creating theater. Together we will make this year a success.

David P. Gordon
Chair, Department of Theater
September 1, 2024

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EDITION: FALL 2024 – SPRING 2025

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GENERAL OPERATIONS AND POLICIES

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP INFORMED:

The Department of Theater makes special demands on students enrolled in the BFA and MFA training programs because of the preparation necessary due to the demands of the profession. Concentration specific rules and policies are in the Student Handbook Appendices for: 1) Acting Students; 2) Design and Production Students (Costume, Scenic, & Lighting Designers, Costume Technicians, Technical Directors, & Stage Management); 3) Dramaturgy and Playwriting. Students are responsible for understanding and following all rules and policies set forth in these documents, as well as those in the graduate or undergraduate university catalog.

THEATER DEPARTMENT GOALS:

A: Technique/Skills:

Development of the technique and skills including the body and mind:

B: Theory and History:

Developing critical analysis skills and abstract thinking by studying:

1. History of Theater events and the evolution of critical thinking/philosophies
2. History of parallel art forms that provide context for Theater History
3. Current and developing practices and theories of Theater of the Global Present

C: Collaboration:

Developing an awareness of the essential nature of Theater as a community of artists working together towards a common goal.

1. *Narrative based work:* The community places itself at the service of the play to represent truthfully the intentions of the author.
2. *Non-narrative-based work:* The community creates a performance experience that is experiential, improvisational, devised: based on content and (when applicable) form.

D: Creativity:

The ability to bring goals A, B and C together to:

1. Examine the theatrical event and the nature of performance.
2. Solve problems in appropriate and efficient ways.
3. Allow each artist to develop his or her potential.

E: Professionalism:

Developing in every theater artist a sense of the standard practices and traditions of Theater so they can recognize other artists and art forms. We create good citizens and ambassadors of the Mason Gross School of the Arts as they join the profession.

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATER STATEMENT ON COMMITMENT TO EQUITY,
DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION *May 5, 2021:***

WHEREBY the Theater Department of the Mason Gross School of the Arts is a component of a large public research institution of higher education, we acknowledge that we are a microcosm of larger society where the existence of centuries of systemic racism built upon an ideology of white supremacy has perpetuated racism, sexism, homophobia, and injustice at Rutgers University.

FURTHERMORE, we recognize Rutgers University operates on or near the ancestral homelands of the Munsee Lenape and Lenni-Lenape, and we acknowledge the school's role in histories of dispossession, therefore we recognize our responsibility to its Indigenous connections.

To this end, the Theater Department is committed to fight for social justice by fully committing to the aspiration as we evolve to becoming an anti-racist, anti-sexist institution that is fully inclusive by striving for equity, diversity, inclusivity, and justice in our classrooms, on our stages, in our shops, and in our studios. As a department, we accept the responsibility to actively dismantle oppressive systems, structures, and narratives to provide a conducive and constructive learning environment for all our students.

Because our art form directly reflects stories about humankind, we are obligated to maintain the core value of realizing the full humanity of our students in terms of their unique backgrounds of race, ethnicity, religion, and cultural heritage. Therefore, we support inclusion for all by supporting anti-racism, gender equality, disability justice, sexual orientation, and more. We strive to honor the multiple identities and life experiences of each student, faculty member and staff.

To support these core values, the Theater Department is committed to recognizing the historical as well as current impact on long-standing systems affecting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Peoples of Color), women, and LGBTQIA+ in the world of theater. The Theater Dept fully supports the goals and aspirations outlined in the EDI Strategic Plan for Mason Gross which includes:

1. Increasing the representation of BIPOC faculty and staff.
2. Increasing the representation of BIPOC students as well as first-generation college students through enhanced recruitment efforts across New Jersey and the nation.
3. Revising curricula to be more inclusive and more representative of the diversity of artistic traditions and cultures around the world.
4. Producing artistic programming that reflects the diversity of artistic traditions and cultures around the world.
5. Engaging, supporting, and collaborating with a diversity of artists, residents, and communities in and around New Brunswick as well as throughout New Jersey.

In addition, the Theater Department aspires to the following standards in the classroom as well as performances on the university stages which we will strive for:

At least 50% representation of authors, artists and/or scholars who identify as BIPOC, women, or members of LGBTQIA+ community, and/or any intersectionality thereof, in academic courses and/or productions. In cases where the course does not allow for such commitment, the faculty agrees to strive to address the power, privilege, and systems of oppression of the discipline in question, and, when possible, provide supplemental materials.

The Theater Department recognizes the collective effort that integrating these curricular and programmatic changes requires. The process of the faculty learning, and unlearning will take time as appropriate materials are developed. However, at this seismic time in the history of our nation, we believe it is the utmost importance for the arts to declare an ethical stance on issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access for the benefit of the student body, our community, and our society in general. We believe that this evolution will better prepare our students to excel as they reflect the world they will soon inhabit.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2024-2025:

It is important to note this year that there are some clever but confusing “changes to designation of class days”. On Tuesday November 21 Thursday classes will be held. On Wednesday November 22 Friday classes will be held (*see below*).

EVENT	2023-2024
Fall Semester Begins	Tuesday, September 3
Regular Saturday Classes Start	Saturday, September 7
Fall Minicourse Dates First 7 weeks	Tuesday, September 3 to Monday, October 21
Fall Minicourse Dates Second 7 weeks	Tuesday, October 22 to Wednesday, December 11
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tuesday, November 26 (Thursday Classes)
	Wednesday, November 27 (Friday Classes)
Thanksgiving Recess	Thursday, November 28 - Sunday, December 1
Regular Classes End	Wednesday, December 11
Reading Days	Thursday, December 12 & Friday, December 13
Fall Exams Begin	Monday, December 16
Fall Exams End	Monday, December 23
Winter Session Begins	Monday, December 23
Winter Session Ends	Friday, January 17
Spring Semester Begins	Tuesday, January 21
Spring Minicourse Dates First 7 Weeks	Tuesday, January 21 to Monday, March 10
Spring Minicourse Dates	Tuesday, March 11 to

Second 7 Weeks	Monday, May 5
Spring Recess Begins	Saturday, March 15
Spring Recess Ends	Sunday, March 23
Regular Classes End	Monday, May 5
Reading Days	Tuesday, May 6 Wednesday, May 7
Spring Exams Begin	Thursday, May 8
Spring Exams End	Wednesday, May 14
University Commencement	Sunday, May 18
Summer Session Begins	Tuesday, May 27
Summer Session Ends	Wednesday, August 13

RUWIRELESS AND RUWIRELESS SECURE:

Rutgers University has wireless network access in many areas of all Rutgers University campuses. All University students, faculty, staff, as well as sponsored guests, can use the RUWireless system throughout the campuses.

1. RUWireless is an open wireless network that only encrypts the login credentials (NetID and password). All other data is unencrypted. This network is used for initially connecting and configuring RUWireless Secure and for unencrypted wireless access for Rutgers guests who do NOT have a NetID and password.
2. RUWireless Secure is the preferred encrypted wireless network. It requires an initial one-time configuration for each device and then allows a secure, automatic connection for that device.
3. RUWireless Secure is available anywhere RUWireless is broadcast; however, the RUWireless Secure network will not be visible if the initial configuration is not completed.
4. To set up a computer, smartphone, or other device for access to these wireless networks, go to: <https://ruwireless.rutgers.edu/>

THEATER COLLOQUIUM:

Theater Colloquium is a convocation, a programmed gathering — for improving communication, building community; and providing informative and creative content, conversation, and connections.

It is expected that students attend Theater Colloquium meetings and events when indicated. Attendance will be taken. This is a community endeavor and brings faculty, students, and staff together in a show of unity and an opportunity to share information, welcome guests and celebrate milestones. If you are unable to attend a Theater Colloquium session you must email Joanna Koster (jk1933@mgsa.rutgers.edu) who will track attendance AND notify your Head of Concentration ***in advance of your absence.***

The schedule of Colloquium meetings will be posted on the Canvas course page at the start of the semester. We will not meet every week. Meetings will not be held during production tech weeks. The time slot will be used for specific student/faculty meetings and student committee meetings when needed.

DISABILITY STATEMENT AND PROCEDURES:

The Office of Disability Services provides reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. They strive to provide the necessary tools, resources, and support for individuals with disabilities to become responsible decision-makers and self-advocates in charge of their own future. They are committed to providing information and resources necessary for students to pursue their academic, personal, and professional goals while at Rutgers. In addition, they are committed to working with administrators, faculty, staff, and students to cultivate an awareness of creating an inclusive environment for all individuals.

1. Accommodations are approved for a student after the student has met with a coordinator within the Office of Disability Services and provided documentation of their disability. Accommodations are intended as a means of leveling the playing field, not providing an advantage over other students, or ensuring success. The goal is to ensure access.
2. A reasonable accommodation is any adjustment that will enable a qualified student with a disability to participate in a course, program, facility, activity, or service and includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges equal to students without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services, or modifications for facilities.
3. A reasonable academic adjustment is a change that minimizes or eliminates the impact of a disability, allowing the individual to gain equal access and have an equal opportunity to participate in the University's courses, programs, services, activities, and facilities.
4. Examples of reasonable academic adjustments: extension of time for tests, course substitution of non-essential requirements, priority registration, etc. (this is not an exhaustive list).

A Letter of Accommodations (LOA) is a document provided by the Office of Disability Services that explains to faculty the reasonable accommodations to be provided to a student. The letter contains course accommodations recommended by the Office of Disability Services based on the student's disability. You can learn more by watching a brief [video](#) that describes what a Letter of Accommodation is. Remember that the Letter of Accommodations is just the first step in implementing your accommodations. You may still need to complete other request forms (such as a notetaking or exam request form) in order to actually receive your accommodations.

When you request your Letter of Accommodation, it is sent from ODS to both the student and their professors. Your Academic Advisor & Counselor, Christine Whalen (cwhalen@mgsa.rutgers.edu) also requests that you send them a copy so that they can

assist in advocating for students if necessary. It is important that the student and professor have a clear understanding of what is agreed upon regarding the use and implementation of these accommodations.

Students are encouraged to submit their LOA to their professor as early in the semester as possible. Students with questions regarding their LOAs should contact their coordinator at ODS.

The Office of Disability Services can be reached in a variety of ways which are listed below:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Phone: 848.202.3111

E-mail: dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu

Location: Lucy Stone Hall

54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854-8045

Livingston Campus

Hours: Monday through Friday 8:30AM-4:30PM

STUDENT HEALTH WELLNESS AND SAFETY:

Mason Gross School of the Arts is concerned with the health, welfare, and safety of everyone in the Theater Department community. If an instructor notices that a student is having problems with attendance, class behavior, illness, or any other matter, they may tell the student that weekly office hours are available at CSB with a trained counselor from Counseling, Alcohol and Drug Assistance, and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) at Rutgers. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources listed below, not only if they are experiencing difficulty, but also as a method of avoiding issues before they begin, in order to make the time at MGSA positive and productive.

Counseling services are offered through Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS), our university mental health support service. CAPS develops an individualized action plan for each student based on your unique needs and the range of resources available at CAPS, within the university, and in the surrounding community. Services include crisis intervention, individual therapy, group therapy, a variety of workshops, alcohol and other drug assistance programs, psychiatric care (medication management), and community referrals.

Staff includes psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, and substance abuse counselors, all with expertise in both general mental health concerns and issues unique to a college environment. CAPS provides students with evidence-based/data driven mental health treatment that addresses each student's most pressing needs.

1. CAPS

CAPS (Counseling, Alcohol and other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services)

17 Senior Street

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

848-932-7884

<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Students also may feel free to visit a MGSA community-based counselor. Community-Based Counselors can provide:

1. Initial connection to CAPS services, including support and/or therapy based on an individualized action plan as well as referrals to other services
2. Tailored workshops, group therapy, retreats and presentations
3. Specialized assistance with critical incident response
4. Consultations with concerned staff or faculty
5. An assessment of that community's needs
6. Guidance and assistance with departmental guidelines and efforts focused on wellness

Please look for postings related to our MGSA counselor locations and hours. To schedule an appointment, *call 848-932-7884*.

For more information visit: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/therapy/community-based-counseling/>

2. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- a. **WellTrack Connect**
<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/shrink-space/>
- b. **Rutgers Wellness Coaching**
<http://health.rutgers.edu/education/hope/wellness-coaching/>
- c. **NJ HopeLine (Suicide Prevention):** 855-654-6735.
- d. **National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** 800-273-8255.
- e. **Crisis Text Line:** Text KNIGHT to 741741; to speak directly with a counselor of color text STEVE to 741741.
- f. **Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)**
(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
www.vpva.rutgers.edu/
The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

g. ***Disability Services***

Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue,
Piscataway, NJ 08854 Tel (848) 445-6800 <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS:

<https://studentsupport.rutgers.edu/services/student-support-referral>

For guidance on how to receive emergency assistance – including unusual and non-chronic financial hardships (i.e., house fire, burglary, medical emergency); Food Insecurity Fund, or LGBTQ Emergency Fund for LGBTQ+ students who are facing financial hardship often as result of family separation or challenges due to social identity, students should contact the Departmental Academic Advisor and Student Success Counselor or the Assistant Dean of Advising and Student Success at 848-932-5208.

CAMPUS SAFETY:

Creating a safe campus and environment is a top priority.

For any emergency: Dial 9-1-1 or “Call when you can...Text if you can’t.”

For a Non-Emergency on Any Campus: Call 732-932-7211.

You can alternately text **RUNB** to 69050 for non-emergency concerns or requests for help.

The Knight Mover Shuttle service: 732-932-RIDE (7433)

The shuttle runs from 3am – 6am Monday to Thursday during the fall and spring semesters.

Walking Buddy service: 732-932-7211 or use a campus emergency phone, available 24/7.

For more information visit the Rutgers Health and Safety [website](#) to find help for any safety-related questions including but not limited to:

1. University Public Safety
2. Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance
3. Vehicle Lockouts & Jump Starts
4. Campus Buses/Shuttle Service
5. Safety Matters Annual Security Report

General Safety Tips from Rutgers Health and Safety:

1. Sign up for text alerts to receive emergency updates (NetID required).

2. Stay alert and aware of people and your surroundings.
3. Avoid alcohol/drugs: Persons under the influence are much more likely to become victims.
4. Immediately notify Rutgers University Police of any suspicious person or activity.
5. Know your route before you go, checking the online campus map.
6. After dark, walk with others. Use well-lighted paths. Study with friends.
7. Use university transportation and walking chaperone services. Never hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.
8. Do not prop open any building doors.
9. Keep your dorm door locked. Make sure first-floor windows, fire escape windows, and security screens are locked.
10. Do not allow strangers into residence buildings.
11. Do not leave property unattended.

ON CAMPUS ACCIDENTS AND ACCIDENT REPORTING:

1. *Reporting Accidents*

An injury report should be completed for all injured persons (Faculty — see above — or Student). Injury reports are available for Faculty with the Administrative Director (Karin Anderson) and for Students with the Academic Advisor and Student Success Counselor (Christine Whalen).

2. *For Serious Injuries Requiring Paramedic Attention*

Please call the paramedics at both 911 and 732-932-7211.

- a. Complete an injury report the SAME DAY of the accident. Be sure to notate the name of the injured person, address, phone, age, and to which hospital the injured person will be taken BEFORE paramedics take the person.
- b. For undergraduate students, injury reports must be submitted to the Academic Advisor and Student Success Counselor (Christine Whalen).

BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING:

Guidance for bias prevention and for reporting a bias incident can be found on the Student Affairs [website](#). Bias is defined by the University as an act, verbal, written, physical, psychological, that threatens, or harms a person or group based on race, religion, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, military service, or veteran status. If someone believes they are the victim of or a witness to an alleged bias incident, that person may report the incident, in person or by phone, to the Assistant Dean of Advising and Student Success, Residence Life staff, or another member of the Student Affairs staff. They can also report a bias incident online [here](#).

WHAT IS FERPA? AND WHY IT MATTERS:

This may come as a surprise to many parents and guardians of new college students, but once a student enters college—no matter their age—they are not allowed to be as involved in the individual's schooling. This is due to a law known as FERPA.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. BUT these rights transfer to the student when they/she/he reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

1. Eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
2. Eligible students have the right to request that a school correct a record or records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
3. Generally, schools must have written permission from the eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - a. School officials with legitimate educational interest.
 - b. Other schools to which a student is transferring.
 - c. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
 - d. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
 - e. Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
 - f. Accrediting organizations.
 - g. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
 - h. Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies.
 - i. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.
4. Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell eligible students about directory information and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school *not* disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify eligible

students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a University/Departmental bulletin, student handbook, etc.) is left to the discretion of each school.

5. What does this mean to you? One: a parent *cannot* email faculty or staff to inquire into grades, the student's progress, or behavior in or out of class without express permission of that student. Two: we are charged also with not disclosing information to others (besides their parents) regarding their academic work or standing unless stipulated (*see above*).

A NOTE ON CANNABIS ON RUTGERS CAMPUS:

While cannabis has been decriminalized in New Jersey, it remains illegal and subject to prosecution under federal law. For Rutgers and other public universities, receipt of federal funds in the form of student loans, grants, and research support is explicitly conditioned on our compliance with federal drug laws. The new state law has not changed our federal law requirements to maintain drug-free campuses and workplaces. Accordingly, the possession, distribution, and use of cannabis—recreational or medicinal—on Rutgers property and in campus facilities remains prohibited. This prohibition applies to students, employees, and visitors while on Rutgers property and at university events.

University community members may seek additional information, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to updated policies pertaining to cannabis use and possession at rutgers.edu/cannabisinfo.

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES:

FACULTY LEADERSHIP:

1. DAVID P. GORDON — Chair of Theater
2. CHRISTOPHER CARTMILL — Associate Chair of Theater, Head of Dramaturgy
3. JENN STAUFFER — Director of Design & Production/ Head of Technical Direction
4. DON HOLDER — Head of Lighting Design
5. CAMERON KNIGHT — Head of Acting & Head of BA Theater Arts Program
6. ANNE McPHERSON — Head of Stage Management
7. VALERIE MARCUS RAMSHUR — Head of Costume Design (*ON SABBATICAL Fall 2024 – Spring 2025*)
8. LEE SAVAGE — Head of Scenic Design
9. KATHLEEN TOLAN – Head of Playwriting

INTERM FACULTY HEADS (Fall 2024 and Spring 2025):

1. SHANE BALLARD — Interim Head of Costume Design
2. ANNA GERDES — Interim Head of Costume Technology

FULL-TIME FACULTY:

3. ELLEN BREDEHOFT — Associate Professor, Costume Technology
4. DAVID ESBJORNSON — Professor
5. DEB JACKEL — Assistant Professor, Acting
6. MARSHALL JONES, III – Associate Professor
7. DANIELLE LICCARDO-MASSOOD — Assistant Professor, Movement
8. SARI RUSKIN — Teaching Instructor
9. ANNE-LOUISE WOLF — Assistant Professor, Voice & Speech

STAFF:

10. KARIN ANDERSON — Administrative Director of the Department of Theatre
11. CHRISTINE WHALEN — Academic Advisor and Student Success Counselor
12. JOANNA KOSTER — Clerical Assistant
13. LAZARUS SIMMONS — Administrative Assistant
14. KEONIA PHILLIPS — Business Assistant for the Department of Theater
15. MARY GRAGEN — Assistant Production Manager
16. DENISE WAGNER — Costume Director
17. BRIAN MULLIGAN – Costume Shop Assistant
18. SUE BARR — Technical Director
19. JOE GEITNER — Carpenter
20. KIT BASSET — Scenic Painter
21. EMRYS WATSON — Lighting Supervisor
22. NICK GUARIGLIA — Assistant Lighting Supervisor
23. ISAIAH PARNELL — Sound Supervisor
24. NIC BROWN — Assistant Sound Technician
25. CARRIE MOSSMAN — Properties Supervisor

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES:

1. Rutgers University Policy Library: <https://policies.rutgers.edu/>
2. The Rutgers Code of Conduct: <https://uec.rutgers.edu/policies/ethics-code-of-conduct/>

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE WEB:

Accounts currently managed by Mason Gross: *For questions about content and postings, DM the individual accounts.*

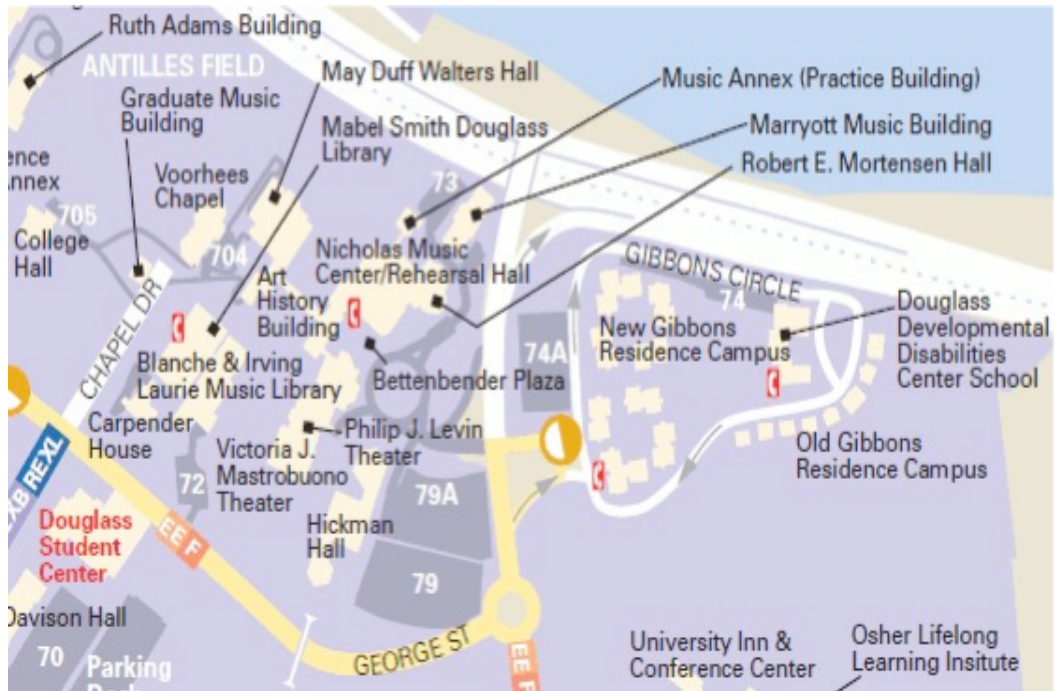
1. Theater Department Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rutgerstheater>
2. Theater Department Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/rutgers_theater/
3. Mason Gross Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MasonGrossSchool>
4. Mason Gross Twitter: <https://twitter.com/masongross>
5. Mason Gross Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mgsarutgers/>
6. www.actors.rutgers.edu
7. www.theaterdesign.rutgers.edu

8. Mason Gross YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/masongrossschool>

CULTURAL CENTERS AROUND CAMPUS:

1. ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER
Joyce Kilmer Ave, Livingston Campus // <http://aacc.rutgers.edu/>
2. BILDNER CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF JEWISH LIFE
12 College Avenue, College Avenue Campus // <http://bildnercenter.rutgers.edu/>
3. CENTER FOR ISLAMIC LIFE
122 College Avenue, College Avenue Campus // <http://cilru.org>
4. CENTER FOR LATINO ARTS & CULTURE
122 College Avenue, College Avenue Campus // <http://clac.rutgers.edu/>
5. CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION & LGBT COMMUNITIES
17 Bartlett St., College Avenue Campus // <http://socialjustice.rutgers.edu/>
6. CENTER FOR WOMEN IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES <https://cwah.rutgers.edu/home/>
7. PAUL ROBESON CULTURAL CENTER
600 Bartholomew Road, Busch Campus // <http://prcc.rutgers.edu/>

DOUGLASS CAMPUS MAP:



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

BIO POLICY:

All directors, playwrights, actors, stage managers, dramaturgs and designers must submit a bio for inclusion in the programs for Department Productions. Our bio policy represents standard professional practice. The Assistant Production Manager will provide a bio form with the current policies attached. Bios will be subject to editing for space and other issues.

BUILDING ACCESS AND SAFETY:

All theater spaces, shops and classrooms are *closed* from 12:00AM to 6:30AM every day. Weekends and “after hours” require swipe access. If students wish to work all night, they should go home to do it.

CASTING AND PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

Students must accept roles in which they are cast and production positions that are assigned to them. Please see your area specific appendix for more detailed information about casting and production assignments.

The Theater Program at Mason Gross School of the Arts prepares students for the wide variety of roles they will encounter in the professional entertainment industry: theater, film, and television. The goal is to develop highly skilled and versatile theater artists.

Theater, film, and television encompass the full range of human behavior and experience and there will be times when students may be asked to perform in roles or work on plays that may contain language and describe situations distasteful to some. Students in the Mason Gross School of the Arts Department of Theater must be able to portray characters and work on plays even if the values and beliefs therein may be at significant odds with their own.

Students in the program are not at liberty to choose the assignments or roles they are cast in. Please see the policies on opting out of production in the Acting Appendix. In addition, altering a text or changing the language of a play to sanitize language or character behavior creates an inauthentic performance of the play that falsifies the artistic integrity of the playwright’s work. Changing the text often violates the rules of the contract in which the school must sign in order to obtain rights to produce the show. It also cheats the audience who came to see a legitimate performance of the play. Altering the text of a play is unacceptable in our program and will result in a failing grade for the work in question. Failure of any core course can result in artistic dismissal.

Actors are required to attend all auditions for which they are called. If a student wishes to audition for a role for which they have not been called, the student may request an audition. At the discretion of the department Chair and/or the Associate Chair and in consultation with the Head of Acting, the student may be granted the audition.

Smoking within the scope of performance is not permitted.

Nudity within the scope of performance is not permitted. **This includes classroom exercises, activities, workshops, and assignments.*

CLASS FEES:

Some classes require class fees to help cover costs associated with teaching them. These are additional costs, above and beyond the general expenditures necessary for classroom and laboratory instruction of consumable materials, equipment for personal use, certain specialized equipment for shared use, or other items or services essential for participation in that course. Please be aware that these fees do not necessarily cover materials, books, or equipment you may be required to purchase for the class. **Fee amounts are subject to change.**

COMPLIMENTARY TICKET/STUDENT RUSH POLICY:

These policies are updated annually and will be disseminated annually at the start of the School Year.

CONTACT LISTS:

The Department maintains contact lists for all students, faculty, and staff. This is standard professional practice. You must provide a current, working telephone number and Rutgers-issued email account. All school correspondence will be sent only to your Rutgers ScarletMail account. You are responsible for checking this email daily. We must be able to contact you at a moment's notice regarding class and/or production information. You must also provide emergency contact and other information for a confidential list that is not made public.

DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLARSHIPS:

Students are expected to be in good artistic and academic standing to receive departmental scholarship or other financial support. Artistic Probation will put a student's departmental support in jeopardy. See Artistic Probation in Artistic and Academic Evaluation which are listed in this handbook.

EMAIL:

ALL students are responsible for ALL information shared via their Rutgers ScarletMail email account. ALL the time. You will receive a good deal of University, Departmental and Production information via this email. There are no excuses for being unaware of Departmental and Production information. (See INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION)

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION:

Students should communicate with faculty and staff *only* on institutional platforms of communication rather than personal ones.

Using institutional communication channels reinforces your important role as a student at the university. When students communicate through official university email addresses or other platforms, it clearly distinguishes their academic communications from personal ones.

Institutional communication methods often come with built-in safeguards and policies that protect the student. Using personal communication (including social media) can blur the lines between academic and personal life, potentially leading to legal or ethical issues.

University-provided communication tools have robust security measures in place to protect sensitive information. This is crucial when dealing with your student data (protected by FERPA) or confidential university matters. Personal communication methods may not offer the same level of security, potentially putting important data at risk.

While personal communication methods might seem more convenient at times, the benefits of using institutional means far outweigh any perceived advantages. It's a crucial aspect of maintaining safety, protecting your rights and privacy, and ensuring clear, accountable communication in the academic environment.

END OF SEMESTER DATES:

Students will be dismissed for Winter and Summer vacations on a date determined by the Departmental Chair and Department Administrator. Because of the University final exam schedule, this date will vary. Besides portfolio reviews and exams, there are other projects students may need to be in attendance for. ***Do not make travel plans before the dismissal date is announced. DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL PLANS THAT INCLUDE LEAVING CAMPUS BEFORE DECEMBER 23 2024. UNLESS SPECIFICALLY ARRANGED WITH YOU'RE YOUR PROFESSORS. THAT IS THE END OF SEMESTER.*** There are exams scheduled by the university and not by the department. Missing those exams cannot be made up and could mean failing those exams.

HOLIDAY WORK HOURS:

It is sometimes necessary to work over certain University holidays in order to maintain our production opportunities. A major feature of our training program is providing performance and production opportunities for all students as an integral aspect of their curriculum.

Students' presence is required for evening and weekend work throughout the production and rehearsal process. Some productions require commitments during holidays, vacation periods, and/or religious holidays. Students are not excused from any responsibilities, rehearsals or performances for any reason unless specifically approved in advance and in writing by the Department of Theater Arts Executive Committee. Under no circumstances will students be released from a technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal or performance. Should a potential conflict

not be approved, the student will need to clear that conflict, and their presence will be required. See Rehearsal and Production Conflict Policy.

Thanksgiving. This year the University takes off Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving weekend. Depending on production work we may take off only Thanksgiving Day. There is often a production in technical rehearsals on Thanksgiving weekend. The Wednesday before, if missed, could count as an unexcused absence.

Religious Holidays. We follow general University policy regarding religious holidays. Out of courtesy to your fellow students and faculty, you must inform your Head of Concentration or Shop Supervisor well in advance if you are taking religious holidays, so work can be planned accordingly.

JAMESON CURFEW:

Work in Jameson MUST CEASE AT 10:45 PM and the space is only available when acting or movement classes are not in session. IF YOU VIOLATE THE 10:45 PM CURFEW IN ANY WAY WE WILL BE IN DANGER OF LOSING THE USE OF THE SPACE. Remember that Jameson is a Residence Hall, and the rule is in force to allow the students to get a little peace and quiet after 11:00 pm. This includes leaving the space quietly at the end of rehearsal.

KEY POLICY:

Keys to department facilities and rooms are available if needed for production or class access. If you need keys, you must obtain these from the office of the Assistant Production Manager. The keys will be signed out to an individual/specific student and MUST be returned at the end of the production they were issued for or at the end of each semester for longer term sign-outs. Keys can be recalled at any time. A student who misuses a space and loses or does not return keys in a timely manner, will no longer be assigned keys, regardless of need or production duties. To request keys email Mary Gragen, Assistant Production Manager, (meg329@mgsa.rutgers.edu) with a list of needed keys, to set up an appointment. Please allow 2 full business days for the request to be filled.

NAME POLICY:

At the beginning of your career in the Department, you will be asked to provide the name you wish to use for inclusion in all Department concentrations and contact lists. It is requested that you only change your stage name at the beginning of each year. Exceptions can be made but the request must be submitted to the Head of Area and Production Manager who will review on a case-by-case basis.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:

During the academic year BFA students may not accept paid or unpaid non-Rutgers theatrical or entertainment industry employment without written consent from the student's Head of Concentration. Violation of the outside work policy may result in dismissal from the program. Summer employment in the industry is, however, encouraged. Let us know when you

apply or interview for summer employment, and faculty will be happy to advise and assist in the process. Please see the “Outside Employment” sections in both the appendices for Design and Production Students and Acting Students.

PARKING AND DEPARTMENT TRANSPORTATION:

Parking, permits, loading-zones, etc. are quite restricted on Douglass Campus. There is an Office of Parking and Transportation that will issue permits, etc. Don't use the loading and fire zone behind the Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater as a parking place. You should only be there temporarily for **LOADING** into the theater or scene shop. Parking in the lot by Walters Hall is a risky business unless you have one of the assigned spaces, and you probably **DON'T**.

PHOTO POLICY:

Archival photos are taken during a dress rehearsal. Any special requests must be made in advance with the Assistant Production Manager if there are specific photos they would like the photographer to take. The Assistant Production Manager will mediate if there is a problem. All those that work on a production will also have access to Department archives for portfolio shots. No video of performances is allowed. Archival videos will be recorded at the Final Dress but are not for public or personal use. The photographer must be credited whenever a departmental photo is used.

PRODUCTION AGREEMENTS:

Students working on productions, including those performing and designing, are asked to sign production agreements. Agreements ensure that everyone is aware of production dates and their responsibilities toward that production. This agreement is based on the contracts signed in the professional theater. The Production Manager will prepare and distribute the agreements for you to sign.

PRODUCTION CALENDAR:

The production office maintains the Rutgers Theater Company Production Calendar ([Production Calendar](#)). This is updated daily, and has the current information regarding all productions, including deadlines, meetings, rehearsal, and performance dates.

PRODUCTION PRACTICE

Production practice is fully integrated with the curriculum of the Department of Theater. Theatrical productions are tightly organized and collaborative events that require each participant to fulfill his or her responsibilities.

REHEARSAL AND PRODUCTION CONFLICT POLICY:

Most students' presence is required for evening and weekend work throughout the production process. Some productions require commitments during holidays, vacation periods, and/or

religious holidays. Students are not excused from any responsibilities, rehearsals or performances for any reason unless specifically approved in advance of the semester and in writing by the Department of Theater Executive Committee. Only in very rare circumstances will students be released from a technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal or performance. Should a potential conflict not be approved, the student will need to clear that conflict, and their presence will be required. Please see more information in the Appendices for Acting or Design and Production.

FITTING ROOM PROTOCOLS

“The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne.” — Geoffrey Chaucer, The Parliament of Birds.

INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this document is to explain the objectives, process, and expectations surrounding the fitting room and what you can do as an actor to contribute to what can be a very exciting experience.

THE FITTING ROOM IS AN EXTENSION OF THE CLASSROOM: When we enter a classroom at MGSA, we – students, faculty and staff - all expect to be treated with respect. We come prepared to teach and learn. The fitting rooms at MGSA are an extension of the classroom. Costume students are learning how to fit costumes and how to tell a story through clothing. Actors are learning about fitting expectations and processes. Faculty and staff are offering their knowledge of professional practices while assessing and guiding students. We are *all* practicing communicating effectively, respectfully and diplomatically. We are learning to balance advocating for ourselves while being a collaborator.

Questions will be asked; ideas will be shared and maybe challenged; mistakes will be made. This is all a part of learning, and it is important that we provide a safe space to make mistakes and have open discussion - because these offer teachable moments we can all learn from and an opportunity to change accordingly and move forward. Staying positive and solution oriented will allow us all to improve at our craft.

ATTITUDE AND EXPECTATIONS: Beyond the general expectation that you would conduct yourself as you would in a classroom, there are several more specific expectations that relate to the fitting rooms and production process that you should be aware of:

1. When cast in a show DO NOT alter your hair, facial hair, or nails without first reaching out to your designer.
2. Be punctual. Strive to arrive at your fitting 10 minutes early! This will help the fitting session run smoothly and on time.
 - a. If you are running late, contact your designer immediately so schedule changes can be accommodated, or so your fitting can be rescheduled.
3. Wear appropriate and clean undergarments.
4. Be in a respective state of cleanliness.
5. Do not wear any strong perfumes, colognes or the like.
6. Don't smoke before your fitting.
7. Do not text or be on your phone during your fitting.

- a. This also extends to taking or sending of photographs during your fitting. This is generally not an accepted practice, and you must ask your designer before taking any personal photographs during your fitting.
- b. Photographs will be taken by the design team at the end of your fitting. These photographs are shared on a need-to-know basis.
- 8. Have an open mind, but don't be afraid to voice concerns you may have in the moment.
- 9. Use the correct pronouns or identifiers of all involved in the fitting.
 - a. As no one is perfect, if a mistake occurs, handle the correction with grace and do your best moving forward.
- 10. Do not under any circumstances flirt with anyone involved in the fitting spaces. This is harassment and will not be tolerated.
- 11. It is important that we leave personal frustrations, stress, and negative emotions outside the fitting room. This is a time for constructive, and positive interaction that drives the fitting toward a successful, productive and collaborative outcome.

NECESSARY INTIMACY: In costume work it is necessary for individuals to engage in what we will refer to as “**necessary intimacy and instructional or informational touch**” At MGSA this will be defined as:

- 1. Touching performers bodies (including hair and faces) in order to measure and establish fit.
- 2. Touching garments and accessories (including wigs) while being worn by performers in order to measure, mark, and establish fit.
- 3. Discussion of performers' bodies (including hair and faces), undergarments, and garments worn by performers in order to measure, mark, and establish fit accurately.
- 4. Touching garments and undergarments worn by performers in order to launder, alter, and maintain them.
- 5. The costume team will announce its intent to touch areas of the body during measurements fittings and rehearsals and wait for permission if permission is not given you will not be touched. We will not enter the fitting room without your consent.

THE PURPOSE AND PROCESS OF A FITTING: Costume fittings are a necessary step in the process of realizing the Costume Designer's vision. Fittings provides us with the necessary information to create a look that best tells the story of a play as well as ensuring that the actor can do everything that is expected of them on stage.

THE FITTING PERSONEL:

There are a multitude of people you can expect to see at your fittings. At MGSA they include the following people:

STUDENT TEAMS:

- 1. Costume Designer (s)

2. Assistant Costume Designer (s)
3. Draper-A person who constructs and fits costumes

MGSA FACULTY AND STAFF

1. Costumes Director:
(2024/2025 Academic Year: Denise Wagner)
2. Assistant Costumes Director
(2024/2025 Academic Year: Brian Mulligan)
3. Interim Head of Costume Design
(2024/2025 Academic Year: Shane Ballard)
4. Interim Head of Costume Technology
(2024/2025 Academic Year: Anna Gerdes)
5. Costume Design Faculty
(2024/2025 Academic Year: David Murin)

THE FITTING PROCESS:

1. When you arrive at Walter's Hall for your fitting please wait in the lobby. The design team will send someone down to the lobby to get you or someone may text you.
2. Upon arrival to the Costume Shop, everyone should introduce themselves, if they are meeting for the first time. If you can't remember someone's name or someone forgets yours, that is okay! It's an opportunity for a reintroduction.
3. To start the fitting, the designer or an assistant will walk you through your costume and explain what they would like you to put on, and the order in which they would like that to occur.
4. Modesty garments will be offered when necessary. Such as an underlayer for a corset fitting, or a slip.
5. While changing, you will be alone in the fitting room with the curtain closed. If you find you need assistance, call out for the designer who is usually in proximity to room.
6. Please do not open the curtain or walk out of the dressing room in a state of undress. Please be considerate of the comfort level of people around you.
7. When you are dressed and ready, open the curtain. This will indicate to the design team that you are ready to continue the fitting, and you are giving consent for them to come in.
8. At this time, discussion about the look between all the parties involved can/will occur and fitting of the garments may begin to happen.

9. Please remember: All bodies are the right body. When an item does not fit properly, that is an issue with the item, not with your body. We will make the necessary changes to the item to ensure the proper fit – this is one of the skills the costume students are developing.
10. Fitting clothing properly involves some degree of physical contact – we will always explain what we are doing and ask for your consent. Your consent will be respected, and you can say no or change your mind at any time.
11. Don't be alarmed if your costume doesn't fit quite right – that is all part of the process. Try to visualize the end-product and have faith in the costumers' process.
12. Make sure to talk through the physical demands you and the costume go through during your performance with the designer and determine whether the costume you are wearing is sustainable, or feasible to wear.
13. One of the main learning goals in the fitting room is for costume students to learn the intricacies of fit. This is a tricky skill that can take years to master and can only be learned in practice. At times a student may ask a faculty member or staff member to step in and help. Sometimes help might be verbal communication and direction.
14. Sometimes a faculty or staff member will ask you if it is okay if they fit you. As previously stated: Fitting clothing properly involves some degree of physical contact – we will always explain what we are doing and ask for your consent. Your consent will be respected, and you can say no or change your mind at any time.
15. At times someone may knock on the fitting room “door” (the wall). This can happen for several reasons: It could be a faculty or staff member checking in, or an assistant delivering a costume piece. You will need to give consent for them to enter the room or open the curtain.
16. A designer may also ask you to step out of the fitting room and into the main room to allow a faculty member to advise on design or fit. This will only happen when you are fully dressed.
17. While every attempt to limit the number of people in W123 will be made, most likely multiple fittings for multiple shows will be happening at the same time.
18. Multiple conversations among varying groups can be happening. It is important that we all stay present and concentrate on what our own team is trying to accomplish in that moment.
19. At this time, the designer will take fitting photos. Because the fitting room is small, these are usually taken outside the fitting room in W123 or in the hallway. A front, side, and back shot of the costume with you in it are the typical shots taken by the designer.

20. All of the information the Costume Shop collects – including measurements, pictures and “skins” preferences will remain as private as possible and will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
21. When the fitting is completed, you again will be left alone in the fitting room to take your costume off. If you need assistance, ask the design team for help.
22. Sometimes actors can get pinned into a garment during a fitting – do not remove any of safety pins in the garment, make sure you are still dressed and ask for assistance from the design team.
23. At this point in the fitting, you will either put on another costume and repeat the process or put on your own clothing and be on your way! Please hang up your costume when you are done. This shows respect for the costume design team and their work.

ROOM SIGN-OUT POLICY:

Classrooms are available to sign out for students’ projects, not necessarily connected to classwork. These must be requested in advance through ARTSpace (artspace.rutgers.edu). All requests must be submitted 2 full business days prior to the day requested (i.e., for Monday, the request must be submitted by Midnight Wednesday. All requests are first come/first serve and subject to approval. Please email Joanna Koster or Karin Anderson to make your room reservation.

SWIPE CARD ACCESS POLICY:

During the week, most theater buildings (Walters Hall, Levin Theater, and VJM) will be open Monday through Fridays from 7am to 9pm. Outside of these hours, you will need to use your swipe card to access these buildings. All buildings will be closed from midnight to 6pm and you will not be able to access any of these buildings with your swipe card. If you are having any issues with swipe access, please reach out to Joanna Koster for assistance.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RESIDENCY AND PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS:

The Department of Theater program has residency requirements for the B.F.A. programs. (Transfer students must take the full program.) Total credit hours are not the only criteria for graduation. All classes and production/design assignments must be completed before you are eligible for graduation. Your Head of Concentration and will advise you regarding your assignments and course requirements. All production and design assignments are AS CAST; in other words, if assigned, you must perform them. We will take requests under advisement, but in the final analysis, the assignments made by the faculty supervisors are not negotiable. See “Casting and Production Assignment Policy”.

CORE CURRICULUM:

As a company, students will take “core” curricular classes. *Core Curriculum* refers to the courses designed to reinforce or challenge assumptions about theater and theater-making and expand understanding. Core Curriculum has been tailored to a company of students serious about becoming well-rounded, culturally aware theater artists. They have a direct and important relationship to Core Training and to the work we put on stage.

When considering a student’s overall standing in the program, the students’ work in these core curriculum courses is just as essential to success in the program as the student’s studio training and their path towards graduation.

DEPARTMENTAL ARTISTIC CRITERIA:

The following criteria will constitute the method by which the Theater Department evaluates students and assigns grades.

1. ***Industry standard of skills:*** As a conservatory-style training Program, we use the practical standards of the industry as a template by which to measure the student's progress. Whenever possible, the student's work will be held to these standards and graded accordingly. The generally accepted level of proficiency required by the theater industry is the model for the student's performance.
2. ***Attendance:*** Many of our classes teach specific skills. These skills form the vocabulary the theater artist uses to communicate ideas. These skills can only be taught by repetition. Gaining technical facility requires practice, and practice can only be assured by attendance.
3. ***Punctuality:*** Being on time to classes and work calls is imperative in the theater business. Also important is completing all assignments on time and in the correct order. Many of the studio classes require that the student build on the work of earlier assignments.
4. ***Responsibility and Leadership:*** Theater is a process of collaboration and the commitment to production assignments must be taken seriously. Leadership and initiative are expected to be a part of the student's overall learning experience. Students must show an ability to work well with others at all levels of the production experience. They must demonstrate an ability to budget time efficiently, both in production assignments and class projects. They must learn to take responsibility for their actions without excuse or complaint.

All students can expect to be graded by the following criteria. This is from the MGSA catalog for an explanation of the foundational school grading policy.

1. ***Exceptional technique*** — All work finished on time and in order, excellent leadership abilities and the ability to make better-than-average intuitive leaps of

imagination when faced with artistic and technical challenges and opportunities. Takes criticism well and participates in class discussion. Expresses ideas clearly and backs up all work with proper research. Perfect attendance.

2. **Good technique** — most work finished on time and in order, good leadership abilities. Progress towards engaging artistic and technical challenges and opportunities is good, but leaps are more mechanical, not yet intuitive. Takes criticism well and participates in class discussion. Learning to express ideas well and backs up all work with proper research. Good attendance, perhaps one unexcused absence if other attendance is perfect.
3. **Technique and thought processes unsophisticated** — work not finished on time and in order and how to address artistic and technical challenges and opportunities is not fully understood. Undeveloped leadership abilities. Expresses ideas clumsily and has not fully grasped the importance of research. Poor attendance.
4. **(BFA only)** Irregular participation in projects and critiques. Work that poorly reflects the student’s ability and clear understanding of the assignments. Little to no leadership abilities. Demonstrates a lack of commitment. Poor attendance.
5. **(MFA only)** There is no grade of D in the MFA Theater Arts Program. A grade of D may be used for an in-class project but will not be used for a final semester grade.
6. Very irregular participation in projects and critiques, failure to complete assignments. Irresponsible behavior towards crew assignments. Very poor attendance.

MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS GRADING SCALE:

*** This scale was approved to be used universally for all MGSA Classes. Classes taken outside of MGSA may have a different grading scale. Talk with your instructor if you have any questions about the grading scale for each individual course.*

Points	Grade	Description
90-100	A /4.0	Excellent, superior achievement
86-89.9	B+ /3.5	On the path towards excellence
80-85.9	B /3.0	Good, solid growth on all requirements
76-79.9	C+ /2.5	Above Average, moving towards consistency
70-75.9	C /2.0	Average, struggles meeting all requirements
60-69.9	D /1.0	Failing or withdrawal while doing failing work
less than 60	F	Failing

ATTENDANCE IN BFA AND MFA THEATER CLASSES:

Attendance is a very important part of the class, and any absence can be problematic. Each instructor sets their own policy that will be made part of the course syllabus.

To keep everyone safe if you are feeling unwell you should not attend any in-person class. If the absence is unavoidable, students must contact each instructor for every class missed in advance of the absence. It is the discretion of the individual instructor to deem an absence excused or unexcused. In some cases, the instructor or department may require documentation before excusing an absence.

Excessive absences, even if excused, may result in the student being withdrawn from class.

Students may use the University Absence Reporting Website: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. This will generate an email to the instructor informing them of the absence. It is the student's responsibility to discuss absences with the instructor, before the absence when feasible, but no later than the next class session in attendance.

Students are responsible for making up any missed work and being properly prepared for the next class.

ABSENCES

The Office of the Dean of Students – Student Support (DOS-SS) provides support for instructors and students regarding extended absences and extenuating circumstances. It is understood that the absence policy for the class is determined by each instructor and students are expected to review the policy outlined on the syllabus.

1. One or Two-Day Absences

For one or two-day absences, students should be instructed to use the University's **Self Reporting Absence System** and NOT contact the Office of the Dean of Students – Student Support. Instructors are notified of the absence through this system. The Self-Reporting Absence website includes the following reminder for students:

Please note: it is up to your instructors to determine how to handle your absence from classes, labs, or exams. Reporting your absence does not "excuse" you. It notifies your instructors, a courtesy that provides an opportunity for you to contact your instructor directly about missed work. In addition to reporting your absence here, we encourage you to contact your instructors directly.

2. Extended Absences

For extended absences or situations for which a student misses multiple exams or assignments, instructors may request students obtain verification from the [Office of the Dean of Students – Student Support](#).

If students are instructed to have their absences verified, they can submit their documentation and request an [Absence and Verification Notice \(AVN\)](#). The student's documentation is reviewed by a staff member from the Office of the Dean of Students- Student Support, and if it confirms the medical or personal matter, an email is sent to the instructor(s) verifying that there is documentation for an absence or extenuating circumstance.

3. Frequent Absences or Complex Personal Matters

For frequent absences or more complex personal matters, students are encouraged to attend [Virtual Drop-In Hours or Schedule an Appointment](#). This allows DOS-SS staff to discuss the extenuating circumstances, review documentation, provide counsel regarding academic and personal strategies, and make referrals to campus resources.

Special Note: for students with a documented chronic condition (medical), academic accommodations are provided by the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and not the Office of the Dean of Students – Student Support. Students must register with ODS for services. Any adjustments to course work or acceptance of late work that is done outside of the students approved accommodations from the Office of Disability Services, is at the faculty's discretion.

4. Requests to Instructors for Special Consideration

In addition to providing verification of extended absences or extenuating circumstances, outreach to instructors from the Office of the Dean of Students – Student Support may include a special request and advocacy for consideration of any academic options that may allow the student to progress in the course and successfully fulfill requirements. Some options for consideration may include allowing the absences to be excused, work to be submitted late, or a quiz or exam to be taken at another time. At the end of the semester, special consideration may include a temporary grade.

5. Instructors' Determination for Special Considerations

It is up to the instructor to determine if special arrangements can, or should, be made for a student's absences, and whether there should be any deduction in points or grades. Even with documentation of medical or personal circumstances, it may not be possible to permit a student to take a missed exam or submit work late.

The DOS-SS staff works to explain to students that each instructor determines whether to allow special arrangements following absences. Factors such as the course format, method of instruction and course requirements, and the student's attendance history, participation, and performance can be part of the determination to consider special arrangements for late or missed coursework.

Students should be reminded of the [Academic Calendar](#) which includes deadlines for dropping a class or withdrawing from the semester. Dropping a course after the deadline is not permitted. Withdrawing from a class or the semester can have academic, financial, or legal implications. Students should consult an academic or financial advisor as well as review the [Withdrawal Checklist](#).

6. Temporary Conditions

Temporary Conditions can be an injury or illness, which lasts 8 weeks or less, so they are not considered a disability. The Office of the Dean of Students – Student Support (DOS-SS), acts as the primary contact for students with a temporary condition. Students will meet with DOS-SS staff and provide medical documentation along with information regarding the academic barriers their condition is causing, and possible academic considerations. Some examples of academic considerations are excusing absences, extended time to complete coursework, permission to arrive a few minutes late to class, permission to take breaks during class.

The DOS-SS staff member will send the instructor(s) a ***Letter of Temporary Condition*** with confirmation of the student's circumstance and identification of possible academic considerations to help the student maximize course participation and fulfillment of academic requirements.

Proposed academic considerations for a temporary condition are not accommodations and are not covered by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). Students with temporary conditions are not registered

with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and therefore do not receive services, such as proctoring, through ODS.

POLICY FOR STUDENT REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS FOR PERFORMANCES, CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS:

There may be times over the course of the semester when faculty have the opportunity for students to attend a performance, sit in on a rehearsal, participate in a special event, or something that is only available to the student at a very particular time. When faculty arrange for an individual or group of students to attend something that conflicts with the student's *other* courses, it is the responsibility of the arranging faculty member to contact the impacted course professors and ask for accommodation for the students to miss the class. The impacted professor has the right to refuse the request. It is not the student's responsibility to obtain the permission, but it *is* the student's responsibility to obtain notes from the missed class and complete any missed work. Any requests must be made in advance.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT:

Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the university's educational, research, and clinical missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. This policy, revised in June 2020, can be found at <https://policies.rutgers.edu/10213-currentpdf>.

Briefly outlined are the types of Academic Integrity Violations according to University Policy:

1. *Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, images, or results, no matter the form or media, without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, a student must identify every direct quotation using quotation marks or appropriate indentation and cite both direct quotation and paraphrasing properly according to the accepted format for the discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- a. Copying word for word (i.e., quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- b. Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own, regardless of the nature of the assignment.
- c. Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources, regardless of format, without proper attribution.

2. Cheating: Cheating is the use or possession of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results or reports, analyses, and other textual or visual material and media as one's own work when others prepared them. Some common examples are:

- a. Prohibited collaboration: receiving research, programming, data collection, or analytical assistance from others or working with another student on an assignment where such help is not permitted.
- b. Copying another student's work or answers on a quiz or examination.
- c. Using or having access to books, notes, calculators, cell phones, technology, or other prohibited devices or materials during a quiz or examination.
- d. Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructors involved.
- e. Preprogramming a calculator or other device to contain answers, formulas, or other unauthorized information for use during a quiz or examination.
- f. Acquiring a copy of an examination from an unauthorized source before the examination.
- g. Having a substitute take an examination in one's place.
- h. Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
- i. Submitting as one's own work a term paper or other assignment prepared, in whole or in part, by someone else.

3. Fabrication: Fabrication is the invention or falsification of sources, citations, data, or results, and recording or reporting them in any academic exercise. Some examples include the following:

- a. Citing a source that does not exist.
- b. Making up or falsifying evidence or data or other source materials.
- c. Falsifying research papers, reports, or other documents by selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one's conclusions or claimed experimental precision.
- d. Falsely documenting experiential and/or internship opportunities that did not occur.
- e. Providing falsified excuses, documents, or other information to excuse late or missed assignments, or to justify regrading.

4. Facilitation of Dishonesty: Facilitation of dishonesty is deliberately or carelessly allowing one's work to be used by other students without prior

approval of the instructor or otherwise aiding others in committing violations of academic integrity. A student who deliberately facilitates a violation of academic integrity can be subject to the same sanctions as the student who receives the impermissible assistance, even if the facilitator does not benefit personally from the violation. Some examples are:

- a. Collaborating before a quiz or examination to develop methods of exchanging information.
- b. Knowingly allowing others to copy answers to complete a quiz or examination or assisting others to do so.
- c. Distributing an examination from an unauthorized source before the examination.
- d. Distributing or selling a term paper to other students.
- e. Taking an examination for another student.
- f. Allowing other students access to your work in violation of course policies.

5. Academic Sabotage: Academic sabotage is deliberately impeding the academic progress of others. Some examples are:

- a. Intentionally destroying or obstructing another student's work.
- b. Stealing or defacing books, journals, or other library or university materials.
- c. Altering computer files that contain data, reports, or assignments belonging to another student.
- d. Removing posted or reserved material or otherwise preventing other students' access to it.
- e. Misrepresenting the contributions of others in the group to give more credit to one student for one's gain.

6. Violation of Research or Professional Ethics: Violations in this category include both violations of the code of ethics specific to a particular profession and violations of more generally applicable ethical requirements for the acquisition, analysis, and reporting of research data and the preparation and submission of scholarly work for publication. Some examples are:

- a. Violating a canon of the ethical code of the profession for which a student is preparing.
- b. Using unethical or improper means of acquiring, analyzing, or reporting data in a course research project, a senior thesis project, a master's or doctoral research project, grant-funded research, or research submitted for publication.
- c. Misuse of grant or institutional funds.
- d. Violating professional ethics in performing one's duties as a Teaching Assistant or Graduate Assistant.

7. *Violations Involving Potentially Criminal Activity:* Violations in this category include theft, fraud, forgery, or distribution of illicitly obtained materials committed as part of an act of academic dishonesty. Some examples are:

- a. Unauthorized acquisition of an examination from a faculty member or electronic files.
- b. Selling, buying, or distributing an examination.
- c. Forging a change-of-grade form.
- d. Falsifying a university transcript.

8. *Reporting:* To report a potential academic integrity violation contact the AIF for the Theatre Department Professor Christopher Cartmill (cjc289@mgsa.rutgers.edu) or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Ellen Bredehoft — ebredehoft@mgsa.rutgers.edu) and complete this [online reporting form](#).

THE USE AND MISUSE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Definition and Examples of AI: Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the capability of computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. Examples include chatbots like ChatGPT, image generators, and other large language models.

1. *Permissible uses of AI:*

AI can be a valuable learning tool when used appropriately. Students may use AI for educational purposes such as:

- a. Drafting outlines to organize thoughts
- b. Iterating on research questions
- c. Brainstorming topics or questions related to a prompt
- d. Improving sentence structure or content organization
- e. Understanding complex concepts

However, these uses must be approved by each individual professor/lecturer. AI tools may also be used as specified in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) if applicable in accord with plan set up by The Office of Disability Services.

2. *Prohibited uses of AI:*

Students are strictly prohibited from using in ALL CLASSWORK AI to:

- a. Complete tests, assignments, or projects
- b. Write papers or create multimedia projects
- c. Generate content without proper attribution

Using AI in these ways constitutes cheating or plagiarism and will result in disciplinary action. AI-generated content must not be claimed as original work.

3. *Academic Integrity and AI:*

To maintain academic integrity, all schoolwork may be checked using AI content detectors and plagiarism recognition software. Students must ensure their work is their own and properly cite any AI-assisted content according to academic guidelines.

4. *Equity and Privacy Concerns:*

AI tools are not universally accessible, which may disadvantage some students. Additionally, the use of AI involves data collection, raising privacy concerns. Students and educators must be mindful of these issues and ensure compliance with privacy laws.

Conclusion:

Responsible use of AI tools can enhance learning and support academic development. However, misuse undermines educational integrity and the learning process. Students are encouraged to use AI ethically and transparently, always prioritizing original thought and proper attribution.

EVALUATION:

Evaluation meetings are normally scheduled during the seventh week of classes and during the exam week. Each student receives written notification of the result of the evaluation. The review is of the student's *Artistic* standing in the program (see **Artistic Evaluation of Theater Students**).

Artistic standings and steps determined at the review are:

1. The student is in good standing.
2. The student is being placed on *Artistic Warning*.
3. The student is being placed on *Artistic Probation*.
4. If a student is currently on *Artistic Warning* or *Probation* and is advised whether the *Artistic Warning* or *Artistic Probation* will be continued or rescinded.
5. A student with multiple Artistic Probations may be *Artistically Dismissed* from the program.

At the end of the semester, all students have a face-to-face evaluation.

At mid-semester, students whose work warrants *Artistic Warning* will have a face-to-face evaluation with at least one faculty member to identify the concern(s) and advise the student on ways to improve their performance.

At mid-semester, students whose work warrants *Artistic Probation* will have a face-to-face evaluation with the Head of Concentration and at least one other faculty representative to review their progress that semester.

At the semester's end a student placed on or maintaining *Artistic Warning* or *Artistic Probation* will meet with the Head of Concentration and at least one representative of the faculty.

A student whose work warrants *Artistic Dismissal* will meet with the Departmental Chair and the Head of Concentration. They will advise the student of the faculty's recommendation to dismiss.

A student whose progress warrants being removed from *Artistic Warning* or *Artistic Probation* will be notified in writing by the artistic advisor at semester's end.

ARTISTIC EVALUATION OF THEATER STUDENTS:

The Theater program faculties and, where appropriate, supervisory staff, formally meet twice a semester to evaluate the progress of each student in the program. Decisions to continue students in the program are not dependent solely on completion of course requirements or grades. The faculty assesses matters of artistic vision, leadership, initiative, work ethic and discipline, ability to collaborate, ability to accept criticism, satisfactory rate of development, and overall suitability for a professional career. This assessment is conducted according to the standards of the profession and can serve as the basis for *Artistic Warning, Probation* or *Dismissal*.

All BFA & MFA students are evaluated at mid-semester and at the end of each semester by the faculty and supervisory staff where appropriate in their concentration. All students are expected to meet a professional standard of work, skill, and discipline. Punctuality and class attendance are mandatory. The faculty, and where appropriate, supervisory staff, is responsible for setting these standards and for guiding and evaluating each student's development. The Chair of the Department will decide, after consultation with the faculty and supervising staff, whether the student will continue in the program.

Artistic Review. At regular intervals, the work of each student is reviewed by the department to determine if the artistic achievement and commitment to the professional program warrants retention in the Program. Theater students are reviewed at mid semester and the end of the semester.

Artistic Warning, Probation, or Dismissal. Students placed on *Artistic Warning* are notified by the Head of their area. Students placed on *Artistic Probation* are notified in writing by the Dean's Office and must satisfy departmental requirements to remain in the program. Students who are being *Artistically Dismissed* are notified in writing by the Dean's Office and in person, either via a face-to-face meeting or phone call by their department adviser. Students whose dismissal has been recommended by the department faculty Scholastic Standing Committee for artistic reasons (deficiency in artistic production and/or quality of work) may request transfer to other programs of the Mason Gross School of the Arts or any other school at Rutgers whose admission requirements

they meet. No guarantee of admission to another division or program can be given to students who have received an artistic dismissal, but the Dean's Office will assist students in completing the necessary transfer forms. Artistic dismissal is subject to review by the dean of the school. The Dean's decision is final and binding. If a student is artistically dismissed, they may request a single "grace semester" in which they are still enrolled at Mason Gross but are not permitted to take any Mason Gross courses. This "grace semester" is to aid students in making plans to transfer to another school within Rutgers or to an outside institution.

Overall academic performance is reflected in the student's GPA. Artistic standing is reflected in the student's performance in Theater Department Curricular Core courses.

In the Theater Program there are Curricular Core courses. Core Courses are an essential component of the student's training. Curricular Core Courses are those students take in a particular concentration and those which students in the department take to enhance the understanding of theater's place in history or society.

ARTISTIC WARNING

BFA Theater Majors can be placed on *Artistic Warning* for any of the following policy violations in one semester:

1. Missing rehearsals, warm-ups and/or performances, production meetings, designer run, tech and dress rehearsals, and crew calls.
2. Unprofessional behavior including, but not limited to
3. being unresponsive to communications from faculty and staff
4. Unprofessional interactions with ANY Rutgers faculty and employees, for example, Box Office and visiting guest artists, and/or causing disruption in classes or rehearsals.
5. Absence from required Theater Colloquium without prior approval.
6. Not adhering to safety and health protocols posted or in this handbook

Any student on *Artistic Warning* will be given one semester opportunity to redress deficiencies.

A student may remain on *Artistic Warning* for more than one semester as a continued indicator of a lack of progress, poor achievement, or poor behavior.

Written notification will be sent to all students placed on *Artistic Warning* from their Head of Concentration explaining the reason for placement on Artistic Warning and the conditions of redress.

**** Any instructor may have a student meet with them to discuss concerns related to their in-class behavior and progress. This meeting will be recorded and/or reviewed/considered when determining if an **Artistic Warning** will be given by the Head of Area.*

Artistic Warning is a preliminary step to **Artistic Probation**. It will be issued at any time when a student's work in a class (or classes), production and performance does not meet expected results. The student will be advised what steps to take to clear this **Warning** by the end of the semester.

ARTISTIC PROBATION

Artistic Probation is a preliminary step to **Artistic Dismissal**. If, in accordance with the grading policies of the Department, a student earns an unacceptable grade or if their artistic development still fails to meet expected results after the **Artistic Warning**, **Artistic Probation** will be recommended.

BFA Theater Majors *also* can be placed on **Artistic Probation** for any combination of three or more of the following policy violations or multiple violations of one or more of these in one semester:

1. Missing rehearsals, warm-ups and/or performances.
2. Missing crew calls.
3. Unprofessional behavior including, but not limited to, being unresponsive to communications from faculty and staff, unprofessional interactions with ANY Rutgers faculty and employees, for example, Box Office and visiting guest artists and/or causing disruption in classes or rehearsals.
4. Absence from required Home Rooms without prior approval.
5. Not adhering to safety and health protocols posted or in this handbook.
6. Repeated offenses or additional offenses with no sign of improvement.
7. Persistent or consistent lack of improvement and/or the inability to apply work to other classes or projects.
8. Single, severe policy violations (as deemed by the Head of Concentration, Departmental Chair and Dean) may also result in immediate **Artistic Probation**.

Because advanced concepts are often introduced in the second semester in most studio courses, it is necessary to allow for late faculty assessment. On occasion, a student may do well in early exercise work but later in the semester show inconsistency in the work or

not turn in assignments. In these cases, a student may be placed directly on ***Artistic Probation***.

Written notification will be sent to all students placed on ***Artistic Probation*** by the Dean's Office, with grounds and rationale provided by their Head of Concentration, and signed off by the Department Chair, thus explaining the reason for placement on ***Artistic Probation*** and the conditions of redress.

Students on ***Artistic Probation*** are ineligible to participate in student committees and activities, such as the Student Play Committee (SPC).

Students on ***Artistic Probation*** may be removed from productions and performances.

Artistic Probation may lead to ***Artistic Dismissal***. Any student in danger of ***Artistic Dismissal*** will be given one semester opportunity to redress deficiencies.

A student may remain on ***Artistic Probation*** for more than one semester as a continued indicator of a lack of progress, poor achievement, or poor behavior. But should a student remain on ***Artistic Probation*** for multiple semesters it can lead to dismissal.

If conditions for redress are not met, ***Artistic Dismissal*** may occur after the first but not later than the end of the third semester of placement on ***Artistic Probation***.

ARTISTIC DISMISSAL

Artistic Dismissal will be recommended if a student earns unacceptable grades or violates stated policies that warrant dismissal according to the grading policies of the Department or if their artistic development still fails to meet expected results after ***Artistic Probation*** or multiple ***Artistic Probations***.

Important Note: The faculty is not required to use each step of this process in every case. If a student's work shows a sudden, significant decline outside the normal review parameters, the faculty may put a student on probation without having issued a warning. In such cases, the faculty will advise the student of concerns and ways to address those concerns. In particularly severe cases, the faculty may recommend artistic dismissal. In such cases, the faculty will meet with the student and provide written notification of the concerns behind the recommendation. Artistic dismissal is subject to review by the Dean of the school.

DEPARTMENTAL BFA GRADING POLICY AS RELATES TO ARTISTIC WARNING, PROBATION AND DISMISSAL:

Each discipline identifies core courses which are central to the student's major and concentration. The grading policy for all required courses in the theater department are as follows:

1. Students are expected to receive a 'C+' or better in all required theater department courses to maintain good artistic standing in the department.
2. A grade of 'C' in one required course is grounds for *Artistic Warning*.
3. Two or more 'Cs' in one semester, or a grade of 'C' in one course over two consecutive semesters is grounds for *Artistic Probation*.
4. A grade of 'D' in one required course is grounds for *Artistic Probation*.
5. Multiple semesters of *Artistic Warning* can lead to *Artistic Probation*.
6. Two or more 'Ds' in one semester, or a grade of 'D' in one course over two consecutive semesters can lead to *Artistic Dismissal*.
7. A grade of 'F' in one required course is grounds for *Artistic Dismissal*. In the event the student is not dismissed, they will be placed on *Artistic Probation*. A grade of 'F' will not count towards the degree. The same course, or a comparable course approved by the department, will have to be successfully completed to fulfill the requirement for graduation.
8. Multiple semesters of *Artistic Probation* can lead to *Artistic Dismissal*.

MFA ARTISTIC REVIEW AND DISMISSAL:

All MFA students are evaluated at mid-semester and at the end of each semester by the faculty and supervisory staff where appropriate in their concentration. All students are expected to meet a professional standard of work, skill, and discipline. Punctuality and class attendance are mandatory. The faculty, and where appropriate, supervisory staff, is responsible for setting these standards and for guiding and evaluating each student's development. The Head of Concentration will decide, after consultation with the faculty and supervising staff, whether the student will continue in the program.

DEPARTMENTAL MFA GRADING POLICY:

Each discipline identifies courses which are core to the student's concentration. The grading policy for all required courses in the theater department are as follows:

1. Students are expected to receive a 'C+' or better in all required theater department courses to maintain good artistic standing in the department.
2. A grade of 'C' in one required course is grounds for *Artistic Warning*.
3. Two or more 'Cs' in one semester, or a grade of 'C' in one course over two consecutive semesters is grounds for *Artistic Probation*.
4. Multiple semesters of *Artistic Warning* can lead to *Artistic Probation*

5. A grade of 'F' or 'U' in one required course, including a thesis project, is grounds for **Artistic Dismissal**. In the event the student is not dismissed, they will be placed on **Artistic Probation**. A grade of 'F' will not count towards the degree. The same course, or a comparable course approved by the department, will have to be successfully completed to fulfill the requirement for graduation.
6. Multiple semesters of **Artistic Probation** can lead to **Artistic Dismissal**.

ACADEMIC EVALUATION OF THEATER STUDENTS

BFA ACADEMIC REVIEW AND DISMISSAL:

All students are expected to meet a professional standard of work, skill, and discipline. Punctuality and class attendance are mandatory. The faculty, and, where appropriate, supervisory staff, are responsible for setting standards and for guiding and evaluating each student's development. The faculty will continue to assess professional growth and consistency of application to work through graduation. **Academic Warning, Probation or Dismissal** are based on GPA and are outlined below.

Academic Review. At the end of each semester, the school's Scholastic Standing Committee, composed of elected faculty and the dean of students, reviews the academic records of all students. If grades warrant warning the student will be so notified.

Academic Probation. Any student — including first semester, first-year students — whose semester average is lower than 1.8 is placed on academic probation. Students are notified in writing of probationary status before the start of the next semester.

Conditions for redress: While on academic probation, students must maintain full-time academic status and must successfully complete at least 12 credits per semester. Please note, repeated poor academic performance in a subsequent term could result in an academic dismissal. (See next paragraph for guidelines for academic dismissal.)

Academic Dismissal. Academic dismissals take place at the end of the academic year, following the spring semester. There are no mid-year academic dismissals. Students ordinarily are dismissed when their semester average is 1.4 or less regardless of their cumulative grade-point average or preceding semester average. Students may also be dismissed if their semester average falls below probationary level in any three semesters or in any two consecutive semesters or if their cumulative grade-point average at any time is less than the following: first year, 1.6; sophomore year, 1.8; junior year, 2.0; senior year, 2.0.

Appeal. Students placed on academic probationary status or academic dismissal may appeal in writing to the dean of students within one week of the date of the letter of probation or dismissal. Grounds for appeal include technical error, extenuating circumstances, changes in temporary grades, and/or additional information not previously available to the committee. Letters of appeal must state the reasons for appeal and must be written by the student, although advice from others may be sought in formulating the appeal.

The Scholastic Standing Committee may determine that the student has presented evidence not previously available and sufficient to require the Scholastic Standing Committee to reconsider the academic case, or that insufficient evidence has been presented to justify further consideration of the appeal. At the student's and/or committee's request, a student may be present at the meeting of reconsideration, unaccompanied by advisor or attorney, to amplify upon his or her appeal request. The committee may reinstate the student who was dismissed for academic reasons, with or without conditions, or may deny the appeal. Some of the conditions for reinstatement include a term average of 2.0 or better and no incomplete grades. The committee also may define future courses to be completed. The committee notifies the student of its decision and any conditions within one week of reconsideration. Action by the committee is final.

Readmission. BFA students who have been dismissed from the school for academic reasons are not considered for readmission until they have given satisfactory evidence that they can further pursue academic work satisfactorily. Mason Gross School of the Arts normally requires that students improve their semester or cumulative grade-point average to a level that would have precluded dismissal action. This can be accomplished through work in the Rutgers Summer Session or by earning 12 to 15 credits at another accredited college or university. Each case is considered on its own merit. Students are not usually readmitted after a second dismissal action. Readmission is not automatic.

MFA ACADEMIC REVIEW AND DISMISSAL:

In the MFA program, no student may receive more than 9 credits for courses in which he or she earned grades of 'C'.

Each discipline's graduate faculty reviews students' performance at the middle of the semester and at the conclusion of each semester. Students who have not maintained satisfactory academic or professional standards in any phase of the program may be dismissed for artistic reasons. Artistic dismissal is subject to review by the Dean of the school.

Official notification of ***Academic Probation, Academic Warning*** or ***Academic Dismissal*** is handled by the Mason Gross School of the Arts Scholastic Standing Committee. A student receiving notice of ***Academic Dismissal*** may appeal this action only by writing to the Mason Gross Scholastic Standing Committee.

CONCLUDING NOTE:

This Student Handbook is a living document. All protocols, assessments, and procedures are intended for your growth and to honor our mutual commitment to this work and the future.

APPENDIX 1

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

for Costume, Scenic, & Lighting Designers, Costume Technicians, Technical Directors, & Stage Management

FALL 2024 – SPRING 2025

Subject to change and any restatement of sections or elements of the preceding document are intentional and highlight the importance of the information contained.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CONCENTRATION IN DESIGN:

Theater design students are part of a dynamic pre-professional training program that includes rigorous class work and abundant practical experience in production, as well as a semester residency in London. Our program provides students with essential artistic and technical skills as well as a strong foundation in theater history and theory. The faculty are distinguished working professionals who provide students with one-on-one mentoring and prepare them to be effective artists and collaborators in the entertainment industry.

The first year provides the foundations of design theory, skills, and history. All first-year students take core classes together, providing a strong sense of community and an appreciation of the collaborative nature of theater.

The second year builds on the foundations learned in the first year and provides more in-depth explorations into the areas of concentration. One course, “Global Theater,” analyzes current theater styles and theories across the globe.

All design students spend the fall semester of their third year in London at Shakespeare’s Globe, where they study with distinguished British designers and take full advantage of London’s dynamic theater and cultural opportunities. Field trips to theater productions, museums, and galleries are all part of the program. Back at Rutgers in the spring, students pursue in-depth training in their area of design.

Students spend the final year studying their specialized design area in further depth, with a special focus on career transition and portfolio presentation. Professional contacts are developed with the Mason Gross faculty and through internships. Design students are presented to the industry at a design portfolio presentation in New York City after their final semester.

Areas of study include costume, lighting, and scenic design.

CONCENTRATION IN PRODUCTION:

Production students are part of a program designed to train students to be a part of the profession in the fields of costume technology, stage management, or technical direction. The program combines integrated knowledge and respect for all aspects of theater at a variety of production levels to create artistically astute, well-versed, thoughtful production professionals. Core training and curriculum come together in production practice, which informs the process on each play. Working from a core artistic sensibility, production students support the work of the contributing artists as together they bring the performance to realization.

During the first-year, production students take core classes together, providing a strong sense of community and an appreciation of the collaborative nature of theater. Moving into the second-year, production students build on the foundations learned in the first year and study more in-depth explorations into their area of concentration. In the third year, the Technical Directors and Stage Managers continue their extensive investigation of production and continue to collaborate with the different areas to develop their leadership skills while the Costume Technology students in the fall semester will join the designers in London where they learn from industry professionals and get to see historical costumes up close. All production students will conclude their programs preparing for transition into the industry with professional development, networking, and portfolio development.

Areas of study include costume technology, stage management, and technical direction.

GENERAL OPERATIONS AND POLICIES

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP INFORMED:

To reiterate the importance of communication spelled out on page 6 (GENERAL OPERATIONS AND POLICIES: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP INFORMED) of this Handbook, The Department of Theater makes special demands on students enrolled in the MFA and BFA training programs because of the professional nature of the programs and the demands of the profession. Specific rules and policies are published in the Student Handbook Appendix for Acting Students and the Design and Student Handbook Appendix for Production and Design Students (Costume, Set, & Lighting Designers, Costume Technicians, Technical Directors, & Stage Management) as well as the 2022-2023 Covid Policy and Health-Related Appendix. Students are responsible for understanding and following all rules and policies set forth in these documents, as well as those in the graduate or undergraduate university catalog.

DESIGN & PRODUCTION POLICIES

COMPUTER LAB (Walters Hall #250) KEYS AND POLICY FOR STUDENTS IN DESIGN AND PRODUCTION:

Students in the Design & Production Programs will be given a code to access the key in the locked box next to the Computer Lab. The key must be returned to the lock box immediately

after each time it is used. Access for general work will not be available during computer class times.

If you are caught not locking up the room after use or giving the key code to any person not authorized to use the computers, computer privileges could be impacted for the remainder of your stay at Rutgers.

These computers are for specific purposes, usually for coursework (computer drafting and illustration and lighting programs) although there is software for general computing available on them, (i.e., Microsoft Office). The University supplies computer labs for the writing of term papers, etc., but it is impossible to monitor or forbid the use of the Department computer lab for these purposes. If you are using our computers to do "normal" work, and the computer is needed by someone for the "specific purposes" mentioned above, you must move from the station or leave the lab to accommodate them.

No one may install new or additional software without the approval from the MGSA IT Department, not even temporarily.

PRINTING IN THE LAB:

The policies for printing will be posted in the lab.

HOLIDAY WORK HOURS:

It is sometimes necessary to work over certain University holidays to maintain our production opportunities. A major feature of our training program is providing performance and production opportunities for all students as an integral aspect of their curriculum.

Students' presence is required for evening and weekend work throughout the production process. Some productions require commitments during holidays, vacation periods, and/or religious holidays. Students are not excused from any responsibilities, rehearsals or performances for any reason unless specifically approved in advance and in writing by the Department of Theater Arts Executive Committee. Under no circumstances will students be released from a technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal or performance. Should a potential conflict not be approved, the student will need to clear that conflict, and their presence will be required. See Rehearsal and Production Conflict Policy.

Thanksgiving. The University takes off Thursday, Friday, and occasionally, Wednesday of Thanksgiving weekend. Depending on production work we may take off only Thanksgiving Day. There is often a production in technical rehearsals on Thanksgiving weekend.

Religious Holidays. (Inc. Easter, Passover, Ramadan, Eid, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Diwali, Holi, etc.) We follow general University policy regarding religious holidays. Out of courtesy to your fellow students and faculty, you must inform the Shop Supervisors well in advance if you are taking religious holidays, so work can be planned accordingly.

JAMESON CURFEW:

Work in Jameson MUST CEASE AT 10:45 PM and the space is only available when acting or movement classes are not in session. IF YOU VIOLATE THE 10:45 PM CURFEW IN ANY WAY WE WILL BE IN DANGER OF LOSING THE USE OF THE SPACE. Remember that Jameson is a Residence Hall, and the rule is in force to allow the students to get a little peace and quiet after 11:00 pm. This includes leaving the space quietly at the end of rehearsal.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:

During the academic year (including Thanksgiving, winter and spring break production periods for students required during those periods) BFA students may not accept paid or unpaid outside theatrical or entertainment industry employment without written consent from the student's Head of Concentration. Violation of the outside work policy may result in dismissal from the program. Summer employment in the industry is, however, encouraged. Let us know when you apply or interview for summer employment, and faculty will be happy to advise and assist in the process.

PARKING AND DEPARTMENT TRANSPORTATION:

Parking, permits, loading-zones, etc. are quite restricted on Douglass Campus. There is an Office of Parking and Transportation that will issue permits, etc. Don't use the loading and fire zone behind the Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater as a parking place. You should only be there temporarily for LOADING into the theater or scene shop. Parking in the lot by Walters Hall is a risky business unless you have one of the assigned spaces, and you probably DON'T.

PHOTO POLICY:

Archival photos are taken during a dress rehearsal. Designers should request in advance with the Assistant Production Manager if there are specific photos they would like the photographer to take. The Assistant Production Manager will mediate if there is a problem. Designers also have access to Department archives for portfolio shots. No video of performances is allowed. The photographer must be credited whenever a departmental photo is used. All Designers and Technicians are encouraged to take their own photographs on that day, as they know what is needed for their own portfolio.

PHOTOGRAPHY LAB (Walters Hall #107-B) KEYS AND POLICY FOR STUDENTS IN DESIGN AND PRODUCTION:

Students in the Design & Production Programs will be given a code to access the key in the locked box next to the Photography Lab door. The key must be returned to the lock box immediately after each time it is used. Access for use of the space will be provided on a first come, first served basis.

If you are caught not locking up the room after use or giving the key code to any person not authorized to use the lab, your access privileges could be impacted for the remainder of your stay at Rutgers.

The equipment in the photography lab is for specific purposes, usually for coursework (scenic design and portfolio preparation) in addition to documentation of design and production work but is available to all

students that are interested in using it for documenting their work. Training is required prior to using the lab. To set up a training session or if any equipment is broken, missing or needs to be replaced please notify Lee Savage at: lee.savage@rutgers.edu.

PORTFOLIO REVIEW (FOR DESIGNERS, COSTUME TECHNICIANS, & TECHNICAL DIRECTORS):

Portfolio Review is held at the end of each semester for all design & production majors. Students are required to attend their scheduled portfolio review. It should be thought of as a final exam. Failure to attend Portfolio Review each semester is grounds for dismissal from the program. Production majors who have participated in a craft class (props, costume construction, drafting, etc.) should show their work on the day of their review. A schedule of the review times (along with specific display information) will be shared with all students at least two weeks prior to review dates. Based on the semester review, matters of Artistic and or Academic Probation and/or Dismissal are considered. Recommendations will be made to the Associate Dean of Students after the review.

The design faculty and the staff supervisors attend the Portfolio Review. The student's classwork, portfolio and resumé are evaluated and discussed as well as the student's production assignments and their work in the shops.

A gallery space will be provided in one of our theaters so that the students can exhibit their work for the critique by the professors. Students will be provided with both vertical and horizontal display space (specifics will be provided on the schedule document). Dress forms or other display requirements can be provided if the student plans for them in advance. Students must return all dress forms, etc. immediately after the review. Students should provide their own push pins to display their work on the walls. Sign your work and provide a name card. New students are expected to present previous professional and academic work at this review. All students can present their summer work at the December review. Students are expected to present examples of their best class work for the semester. Students are expected to have their drawing sketchbooks available but may wish to select special drawings for display. Any realized production work should be displayed.

BFA graduating students are expected to display their classwork and portfolio work in the form of a current, edited, and professional portfolio including a current resumé. Students will be advised on the format by their advisors. Failure of a graduating student to prepare and display a current, complete, edited, and professional portfolio and resume is grounds for dismissal from the program.

See the posted schedule of interviews for exact times and display methods. After seeing the work, the design faculty and staff will meet to discuss the student's work and progress. This discussion will form the basis for the critique.

Each design student, starting with their first spring semester, will be assigned a time for a 10 or 15-minute critique. This will take place in the gallery space in front of the student's work and will include the design faculty/staff and the student. Students in their first year (fall) semester will participate in a group discussion/introduction rather than an individual meeting. A written

report of the critique comments will be placed in each student's permanent file in the department secretary's office, and a copy is given to each student at the review. Students are asked to initial the file copy. This does not mean you agree with the review, only that you heard it.

PRODUCTION AGREEMENTS:

Students working on productions (acting students and design students) are asked to sign production agreements. Agreements ensure that everyone is aware of production dates and their responsibilities toward that production. This agreement is based on the contracts signed in the professional theater. The Production Manager will prepare and distribute the agreements for you to sign.

PRODUCTION CALENDAR:

The production office maintains the Rutgers Theater Company Production Calendar ([Production Calendar](#)). This is updated daily, and has the current information regarding all productions, including deadlines, meetings, rehearsal, and performance dates.

PRODUCTION

Students work in the production shops. You get credit for these hours by registering for the Production Techniques or Theater Practice classes. Your grade for the Production Techniques or Theater Practice class will be based on your attendance and the quality of your work. During the semester Portfolio Review, faculty and supervisors will assess the quality of your work and assign grades accordingly.

Shop hours provide the labor to get the shows built, rehearsed, and performed. This time in the shops also allows you to build your craft skills and are an integral part of the curriculum. Theater Practice and Production Techniques is a class and with all other classes it has an assigned time, beyond the class time, each shop has additional work calls. These work calls will be scheduled at the start of the semester and are listed on Canvas. These center around the weeks leading up to Tech and Tech week and will vary with your level of responsibility. Please review the Holiday and Break Policy regarding when you are expected to be available to work on productions. As your responsibilities increase, so does your time commitment. Each student must decide for themselves how to budget their time. The breakdown for the work requirements for each class of design and technology students is as follows:

BFA 3/3.5/4 — 11 hours of Shop Time per week*, work calls during tech weekend, All Strikes

BFA 2 — 7 hours of Shop Time per week*, work calls during tech weekend, All Strikes

BFA 1 — 3 hours of Shop Time per week, 1 work call during tech weekend, All Strikes

(*or as required if assigned as run crew)

**Lighting Design* students work one less hour a week as they are required for all focus calls during the semester.

You will likely have a production/design assignment each semester in addition to your normal theater practice or production techniques hours. These assignments have SEPARATE and ADDITIONAL hours required. You will be registered for another class for these assignments (and are thus getting additional credits) which require their own hourly commitments. The production techniques hours and the production/design assignment hours OVERLAP, of course, but you cannot expect to get credit for your production/design assignments by only working your production techniques hours.

During technical rehearsal weekends you should plan to make yourself available to help get the show onstage. If a work call is scheduled on tech weekend, it is required. Take the responsibility to extend a helping hand, because next week you'll be the one asking for help.

Persons who are not registered students at Rutgers or on the faculty and staff are not permitted to attend work calls.

PRODUCTION MEETINGS:

Production meetings are held weekly from the initial design meeting up to the first day of tech. These meetings are attended by the Director, Production Manager, all designers (including assistant designers), the heads of Design and Production, all shop supervisors, and any other students with production assignments that warrant their attendance. Stage Managers join these meetings during their Prep Week and the whole SM team will attend. These meetings will be posted on the Rutgers Theater Company Production Calendar ([Production Calendar](#)).

REHEARSAL AND PRODUCTION CONFLICT POLICY:

All students' presence is required for evening and weekend work throughout the production process. Some productions require commitments during holidays, vacation periods, and/or religious holidays. Students are not excused from any responsibilities, rehearsals or performances for any reason unless specifically approved in advance of the semester and in writing by the Department of Theater Executive Committee. Under no circumstances will students be released from a technical rehearsal, dress rehearsal or performance. Should a potential conflict not be approved, the student will need to clear that conflict, and their presence will be required.

SPRAY PAINTING POLICY:

No spray painting inside any studio, classroom, or hallways. Use the spray booths in the properties shop. No spray painting outside on any wall, sidewalk, or other surface. If you put down paper, you can spray paint on the grass but in out of the way areas only.

STRIKE POLICY:

CHECK WITH YOUR SHOP SUPERVISOR FOR STRIKE TIMES. All BFA design, production and stage manager students are required to attend ALL STRIKES. Upon arriving at the strike, all students are to report to the Shop Supervisor for which area they were assigned to for Strike. You will receive your strike call time by the Tuesday prior to the Sunday Strike. All students must also check in to receive credit for attending the strike.

STAGE MANAGER STRIKE GUIDELINES:

If the strike is for the production and you are Stage Managing or Assisting, on closing night you must clear the booth and backstage areas of personal belongings; clean prop storage and actor tables backstage; clear the call board; return all SM supplies to their homes in the SM office; clear dressing rooms of personal belongings; and throw out the trash. You are excused from the strike the following day.

STUDENT DESIGN & PRODUCTION OFFICES:

3RD/3.5 YEAR DESIGN OFFICE (Walters Hall #251&253):

Third year (spring semester) and fall 3.5 design students will have access to dedicated workspace in Walters 251 and 253. First and Second-year students working in an assistant/associate capacity on productions may also have access to this space, at the discretion of designers, for purposes of necessary production work only.

Keys may be obtained from Mary Gragen, following department Key Policy (listed above.)

STAGE MANAGEMENT OFFICE (Walters Hall #249):

Stage Management students will have access to dedicated workspace in Walters 249.

Keys may be obtained from Mary Gragen, following department Key Policy (listed above.)

LIGHTING DESIGN OFFICE (Light Lab Annex, Levin B):

Lighting Design students will have access to dedicated workspace in the “annex” directly behind the Light Lab (Jameson B). This space can be accessed only through the Light Lab.

PLEASE NOTE: Workspace is limited to the room directly adjoining the Light Lab only, and does not extend to the additional space beyond.

Keys may be obtained from Mary Gragen, following department Key Policy (listed above.)

USE OF CLASSROOMS AND FACILITIES:

Students are responsible for cleanliness of all class/workspaces, including storage areas in Walters Hall #107. Please remember to clean up after yourself whenever working in any classroom space, as classrooms are shared with many students and instructors.

Limited storage space for personal tools, supplies and in-process work is available in Walters 107. When using this space, please be respectful of other students' belongings. While available for use during the semester, these areas are not meant for long-term storage, and any items left after the end of the semester may be removed by department staff in order to make way for use by future students. It is your responsibility to keep these areas clean and organized.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR DESIGN AND PRODUCTION:

The requirements listed below in the sections "Design Abilities", "Technical Skills", and "Leadership Skills" will form the template for the evaluation made by the faculty as to the student's progress. Even taking all this into consideration, there will be aspects of the evaluation that are necessarily subjective and does not necessarily apply to each major. The faculty members, as working theater artists themselves, will respond to the student's work not only as teachers but as artists. The student has a right to expect the faculty to employ their knowledge based on artistic training and experience as a part of the evaluation process.

Leadership Skills. The student must develop leadership skills. Theater has evolved a traditional and specific working hierarchy that allows the production process to be managed. It is important that all theater artists be familiar with the organization of this hierarchy and their place within it. As a student, and as a working professional, an individual can expect to be assigned to various jobs within this hierarchy. You need to know how to take instructions and how to give them. We are training designers and technicians who usually occupy positions of authority and responsibility, and we need to see a continuing growth of the necessary leadership and management skills.

The student must exhibit:

1. ***Prompt attendance*** to all classes, meetings, crew calls.
2. ***An ability to work well with others***, both as a crew member and as a crew chief.
3. A basic ***working knowledge of the traditional methods*** of managing a theatrical task and using the time and talents of the crew efficiently.
4. ***Responsibility to the work process.*** If assigned a job, the student must fulfill the requirements completely and without hesitation. Attendance is vital, and work must be performed promptly and with a positive attitude.
5. ***Initiative.*** Within the framework of their assignment, the student must take responsibility for assuring that their work is fitting into the overall effort. They must keep up an active communication with their supervisor to ensure that all tasks are performed in the proper order and all the information is up to date.

6. An **ability to take responsibility** for their actions without excuse or complaint.
7. An **ability to think quickly and clearly** "on their feet" and to work well under pressure.

Technical Skills. Students must also develop and exhibit mastery of the following technical skills necessary to communicate design and technical ideas: (not all skills apply to all specialties)

1. Sketching and drawing in a classical, naturalistic manner.
2. Working in watercolor, pastel, colored pencil, inks and other color media.
3. Proportion, color theory, composition, texture.
4. A good working knowledge of the vocabulary of both traditional (Proscenium, Thrust, Arena, Black Box) and non-traditional performance spaces.
5. A good working knowledge of how to conduct research in the library and other sources.
6. Drafting and model-making.
7. Basic familiarity with the tools and techniques of scenery construction, rigging and painting.
8. Craft skills necessary for use in the creation of properties or costume crafts.
9. Tailoring, cutting, draping, pattern drafting and fitting.
10. Computer literacy in basic word processing, database/lighting, drafting, rendering and photo manipulation programs.
11. Basic familiarity with electricity, lighting instruments and control systems.

Some of the above technical skills are applicable to one discipline more than the others and allowances will be made, but all designers and technicians should be familiar with all the skills in order foster better collaboration between designers and technicians.

Design Abilities (for Designers). The student must possess the abilities listed below which are concerned with how a theater artist processes information. The ability to assemble ideas in a unique and expressive way is the mark of a designer. The technical skills listed in the previous section must be integrated with an ability to think clearly about the theatrical art.

The student must exhibit:

1. Mastery of historical and period styles and how the behavior and social context of individuals changes on account of them.
2. Mastery of historical and traditional styles of theater design.
3. A working knowledge and appreciation of the standard classical literature of the theater.
4. An understanding of the need to complete all assignments on time and in order. The nature of theatrical training requires the student to continually build on past work, and their progress cannot be analyzed unless assignments are completed as required. The student must also gain the ability to organize their time efficiently.

5. An ability to read and analyze a script and extract a design idea from it that not only solves the problems as required but reflects the designer's artistic response to the piece
6. An ability to take constructive criticism. Students must also develop the ability to critique the work of others in an intelligent and expressive way.
7. An ability to collaborate and express themselves clearly in conversation with other designers and directors. They must not only express their own design ideas well, but they must also exhibit openness to other ideas and show an ability to integrate other ideas with their own.

BFA COMMITMENT TO CONCENTRATION

Students working towards a BFA Design and Production Concentration to choose from are:

- Costume Design
- Costume Technology
- Lighting Design
- Set Design
- Stage Management
- Technical Direction

The Department does not have the resources to support concentrations in Sound Design, Projection Design, Properties, Scene Painting or Master Electrician.

BFA Design and Technology students must commit to their concentration by the end of their second year so that production assignments can be made correctly and build to more advanced assignments. If a BFA wants to change their concentration after the end of the second year, they need special permission in writing from the program head and may be required to stay for more time to properly fulfill their production assignments.

Stage managers must commit to their concentration in their first year.

CONCLUDING NOTE:

As with the full Student Handbook this is a living document. All protocols, assessments, and procedures are intended for you growth and to honor our mutual commitment to this work and the future.

APPENDIX 2

ACTING STUDENTS

for students in the Acting Program

FALL 2024 – SPRING 2025

Subject to change and any restatement of sections or elements of the preceding document are intentional and highlight the importance of the information contained. Acting students are responsible for the information contained in this Appendix, as well as the general departmental policies and procedures outlined and explicated in the full Student Handbook.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

COMMITMENTS TO THE PROGRAM:

Your faculty is proud to have committed their expertise, energy, time, mindfulness, and care to this work — the work of an artist. Being a part of this program, you have chosen a similar path of commitment. You have entered a rigorous and, at times, challenging program committed to the complete artist — mind, body, and spirit. Your time here is focused on the development of the whole artist and individual — in our chosen path those two are intertwined.

The work of an artist asks for expansiveness of imagination, proficiency of craft and an abiding curiosity. This is a time of multiple modes and mediums for artistic expression. Each class has been designed to guide you on your journey of discovery. And there is much to discover.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The Acting Program offers a rigorous and collaborative course of study for students who aspire to a career in the ever-evolving entertainment industry. Students are trained in various acting techniques including Meisner, Adler, improvisation, rhetoric, on-camera, devising, classics, and global theater with a commitment to new and emerging methodologies and practices.

Students will study at the Rutgers Conservatory at Shakespeare's Globe in London. The training concludes with a focus on the industry and launching of the artist's professional careers. Students are eligible for productions in the program in the second through final years in study.

The Theater Department programs are committed to equitable, representative, and evolving practices to support each student on their journey by continuing to learn, scrutinize and adjust our program to facilitate training that is current, imaginative, and

inspired by the needs of the students, the demands of the industry and work that is yet to be created.

Note. The program is currently transitioning to a four-year program and therefore there are differences in the trajectory of curriculum for those entering in 2022.

YEAR 1: PROCESS:

- Acting – Elements of the Meisner progression and Storytelling
- On-camera
- Auditioning
- Voice & Speech
- Movement
- Theater Histories
- Electives/Liberal Arts/ University Requirements
- Crew and production (non-performance) assignments

YEAR 2: LAYERING

- Acting – Acting Technique and Scene Study: with a focus on contemporary and modern works
- Voice & Speech – Continued progression
- Script/Text analysis
- Contemporary Global Perspectives
- Electives/Liberal Arts/ University Requirements
- Production assignments – Beginning to move from the classroom to the stage
- Movement
- Auditioning
- General theater experience course in additional acting techniques

YEAR 3: APPLICATION AND CONSISTENCY

- Acting – Scene study
- On-camera
- Voice & Speech
- Devised Theatre
- Script/Text analysis
- Electives/Liberal Arts/ University Requirements
- Production assignments
- Movement
- Auditioning

YEAR 4: BEGIN AGAIN

- Study Abroad (Shakespeare's Globe – London)
- Professional Industry Showcase – NYC
- Production assignments
- Business of the Business
- Auditioning
- Lab (Voice, Movement, Speech, Acting, Text) – Special techniques

ABOUT ADVISING (see full Handbook for departmental details):

The Head of Acting leads the Acting Program and in that capacity is there to help with ideas and issues related to the program.

Academic advising — navigating the University system and protocols — is the purview of the Departmental Academic Advisor and Student Success Counselor (Christine Whalen). Departmental Academic Advisor and Student Success Counselor is also there as a personal resource, sounding board and a support outside of the faculty with whom you have class.

Your Acting Faculty is also there to advise you as you experience the program. Each professor has a unique perspective based on diverse experiences and areas of expertise. Seek each out as a resource when questions and concerns arise.

ABOUT PROFESSIONALISM:

Simply stated, professionalism is respect for the work, respect for the process and respect for all those in the room. It is this attitude, born out in action, with which we all should enter the classroom, the rehearsal room, the fitting room and ultimately the performance space.

Personal Discipline is an artist's strength. Attendance and promptness, preparedness, effort and energy, consistency, courtesy, responsibility, and collaboration are all hallmarks of professionalism. This is your opportunity to practice. Classrooms — the work, the process, and individuals there — are a platform for the profession. Use your classes as a place to practice the commitment you have made to this work. Rehearsals and performances are another opportunity for growth and practice as they are an extension of the classroom.

REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE:

For each production in which you participate you will be given a syllabus with much the same language, intended to remind you of this information.

The Rehearsal and Performance program is an extension of the classroom work, giving each student the opportunity to apply that training in a variety of performance projects. To ensure the vital connection between class work and performance projects, policy dictates all students are ELIGIBLE TO BE cast in production assignments each semester beginning with the second year of training. Each year there will be one production assignment that is required which will guarantee that the actors get to work each year of their training on at least one production. Starting in their second year, students will also be given the opportunity to audition for most productions throughout the season. Students must complete a performance credit each school year.

These guidelines are necessary for the fair and efficient operation of rehearsal and performance. They help to ensure the best training for all students involved and the highest quality of production work possible and most nearly approximate the demands and necessities of the profession.

AUDITION and CALLBACK PROCEDURES and EXPECTATIONS:

Students must be available to participate fully in all scheduled auditions and callbacks for all productions. The dates of these sessions will be provided with time to adjust schedules, if needed. Students should not schedule travel or personal appointments that conflict with auditions, rehearsals, or performances.

Failure to be available for the entire audition and callback period without having made specific arrangements in advance may result in the student's removal from casting for that round. The student will be required to make up the credit that meets the criteria set forth by the Acting Faculty.

REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals, performances, and costume fittings/make-up tests. Daily rehearsal calls are established by each production's director and stage manager adhering to the hours outlined in the department policy.

Requests to accommodate absences for any portion of auditions, callbacks, rehearsals, or performances due to religious observances, important family events or other serious circumstances must occur one month prior to auditions. The student must notify the Head of Acting in writing via e-mail at ck780@mgsa.rutgers.edu and then must complete an accommodation request form. Assuming the student is in good standing, and after consultation with directors, appropriate area and discipline heads, the Head of Acting will respond to the request. A copy of the Accommodation Request Form will be made available upon request.

EMERGENCIES:

If an emergency arises requiring a student to be absent for any portion of a rehearsal or performance, the student must contact the Head of Acting Cameron Knight at ck780@mgsa.rutgers.edu and the stage manager of the concerned production immediately. Should an emergency arise, that would require a student to miss more than one day of rehearsal, or prevent completion of a Rehearsal and Performance project, the student must consult with the Department Chair and the Head of Acting, who will determine the method of completion for the loss of credit.

CASTING:

Although each director brings their own choices to the casting session, final casting emerges from a discussion with the Head of Acting and the Director(s).

Casting is not a right but a privilege. A student's academic standing may weigh in the processes and may, should the need arise, require a student's being removed from the casting pool. Such a decision is not taken lightly and will be fully vetted by the Head of Acting.

The following elements serve as the guidelines in the casting:

- The quality of the student's audition.
- The artistic vision of the director.
- Training considerations, including the student's progress in the program, the year in the sequence of study, previous casting, and the nature of the role in question.
- A commitment to diverse and equitable casting (when appropriate) within the director's vision and the diversity of the acting company.

OPTING OUT OF CASTING:

A student can opt out of a semester of casting. OPTING OUT means to not participate in any productions in that semester. A student cannot select between plays they wish to participate in. There may be occasions in which there is only one play in a semester that a student can participate in (this could be due to the nature of the production requirements). In order to OPT OUT, they must submit the notification to the Head of Acting prior to the audition process. Requests to OPT OUT after casting has been released will not be accepted.

Note: Opting out of a semester of productions, does not guarantee casting in a different semester or priority in the next round of casting. Students cannot OPT OUT of the required (guaranteed) productions (second year plays, devised, Shakespeare). Students are also required to make up any credits necessary for graduation.

A NOTE ON NUDITY:

There will be no use of nudity in production at MGSA.

A NOTE ON SMOKING:

There will be no smoking in production at MGSA.

CLASSWORK AND PRODUCTION:

Students are expected to balance class work and performance demands equally. Should issues of balance arise it is important to communicate concerns and questions in a timely manner so that help and guidance can be given.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT:

During the summer months Acting students are encouraged to seek work as they see fit. During the academic year (including Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring break) production periods for students may accept work but in comprehensive discussions with the Chair of the Department, the Head of Acting and the Acting Faculty. Students are responsible for all missed work. Multiple absences from classes or rehearsal due to outside work may require a student to seek a leave and return once the professional obligation is complete. Students must be in discussion with their faculty prior to auditioning and accepting outside work. Conversations after work has been accepted does not obligate the faculty/department to support these opportunities and excuse you from classes and production work. There are occasions in which outside work cannot be accepted due to the impact it would have on training.

MIDTERM AND SEMESTER EVALUATION:

See full Handbook for criteria for Warning, Probation and Dismissal

Evaluation of your work is in place to help you as you grow in your work. Midterm student's whose work warrants **Warning** or **Probation** will have a face-to-face meeting with the Head of Acting and other Acting Faculty to help identify concerns and work to guide the student toward improving their work.

At the end of each semester all students will have a face-to-face meeting with the Acting Faculty. Students whose progress warrants being removed from **Artistic Warning** or **Probation** will be notified at this time. A student being continued or placed on **Artistic Warning** or **Probation** at the end of the semester will also be notified at this time. In rare cases, students whose work warrants **Artistic Dismissal** will meet with the Departmental Chair and Head of Acting. They will advise the student of the faculty's recommendation to dismiss.

ADVISING THE STUDENT OF ARTISTIC PROBATION OR DISMISSAL:

See full Handbook for more details regarding criteria for Probation and Dismissal:

A FURTHER NOTE ON THE FINAL SEMESTER

The last semester is designed to support and guide students in bridging the gap between acting in a conservatory context and working professionally. Much class time is spent in the refinement of the artist's craft, integrating all aspects of the training program.

Emphasis is placed upon the “business of the business” as faculty will aim to provide students with tools to apply the skills they have developed to the “real world.” Besides your core classes, classes include Audition Techniques, Acting for the Camera, meeting with agents and casting directors, and an intensive colloquium on Professional Transition. Performance opportunities include eligibility for all departmental productions.

The year culminates in the Rutgers Actor Presentation in New York City for invited members of the profession. This Actor Showcase is an opportunity to present your work to a variety of professionals. Participation in the Showcase is not a guarantee and your engagement, energy and preparation and evidence that you are ready to join the industry are required for you to participate.

A CONCLUDING NOTE:

As with the full Student Handbook this is a living document. All protocols, assessments and procedures are intended for your growth and to honor our mutual commitment to this work and the future.

APPENDIX 3

DRAMATURGY & PLAYWRITING

for BFA students in Dramaturgy and MFA students in Playwriting

FALL 2024 – SPRING 2025

Subject to change and any restatement of sections or elements of the preceding document are intentional and highlight the importance of the information contained. Dramaturgy and Playwriting students are responsible for the information contained in this Appendix, as well as the general departmental policies and procedures outlined and explicated in the full Student Handbook.

PROGRAM OVERVIEWS

BFA DRAMATURGY:

A dramaturg has become an integral part of the production team across multiple disciplines. The dramaturg can perform many functions, depending on the production. It is the job of the dramaturg to learn as much as possible about the play/performance — its context, its structure, its language (whether spoken, sung or movement), its themes, etc. Dramaturgs assist the production team in supporting development and providing an extra set of educated eyes and ears during the creative process to effectively realize production. Dramaturgs also strive to enhance the audience/community's experience of a performance by developing supplemental interpretive materials like lobby displays, talk backs, outreach, and program notes.

The dramaturgy curriculum provides students with a strong multi/transdisciplinary background in performance practices, performance literature and theory, community/audience engagement and the Humanities.

A core course of study focusing on building the skills for production dramaturgy is augmented by directed electives in history, foreign languages, and other non-drama courses to build a firm foundation in both theater and the liberal arts. Students in the dramaturgy concentration will cultivate their intellectual prowess, analytical skills, and artistic passions through integral involvement in the Mason Gross productions (Theatre, Dance, Music, Filmmaking, Performance Art).

Dramaturgy students will work with performance makers (directors, choreographers, playwrights, designers, managers, choreographers, actors, and audiences, etc.) in the conception and execution of productions, bringing their knowledge of performance history and dramatic structure, their skills in script analysis and contextual research, and their capacity to engage in collaborative conversation into the rehearsal room. These skills also serve dramaturgy students as they practice the art of audience/community outreach and engagement.

The Dramaturgy concentration specializes in production development, production support,

critical writing, audience outreach, season planning, and artistic leadership.

1. Students in the MGSA Theater Department Dramaturgy Concentration have a core curriculum of performance courses that are augmented by a wide array of electives from across the university.
2. Dramaturgy students are required to take eight dedicated dramaturgy courses (Intro to Dramaturgy, Theatre Histories 1 & 2, Script Analysis, Global 1 & 2, Aesthetics of Space and New Forms, Outreach and Community), as well as departmental courses in directing, acting design, producing, playwriting and interdepartmental courses housed in Dance, Music, Filmmaking and Visual Art and Design.
3. In addition to MGSA courses, students are required to take classes in the English, History and Psychology departments of SAS.
4. Students will demonstrate proficiency in at least one foreign language and take a range of elective courses with Mason Gross and departments across the university.
5. The curriculum of the first year of the concentration is intended to prepare the students to be assigned to productions in various capacities in their second, third and final year.
6. Students are required to complete an internship through one of the many area partner schools and institutions with which the department is connected.
7. Students will be encouraged to pursue study abroad opportunities — with endorsement for dramaturgically specific programs in Berlin and Cape Town.

MFA PLAYWRITING:

At the core of Rutgers' playwriting program are the weekly Playwright Seminars, an ongoing class for the duration of the degree in which playwrights deepen their art and hone their craft. Each semester, students will work on a play and play fragments toward developing a portfolio of work. Toward a rich experience of plays and playmaking, we read and attend productions at various theaters, mainly in New York City, as well as with theater professionals.

Recent visits have been to Playwrights Horizons, the Bushwick Starr, Rattlestick, BAM, the Public Theater, Broadway, Soho Rep, New York Theatre Workshop, the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, Ensemble Studio Theatre, and MaYi Theatre Company. We have met with numerous playwrights and theater staff.

Emphasis will be on developing each playwright's unique voice and inclinations. There will be occasional in-class writing and writing assignments, toward exploring new approaches, jump-starting a play, and enriching or unlocking a current play-in-process. Each week you'll write a brief response to a play you have read or seen.

In the first year, the playwrights will have a staged reading of a new work, directed by an outside professional director. In the second year and the last semester, playwrights will have productions of their plays, collaborating with student designers, actors, stage management, and professional directors.

Screenwriting and Television Writing are offered each year, as is Writers' Workshop where playwrights explore their works-in-progress with actors and a director.

MFA ARTISTIC REVIEW AND DISMISSAL:

All MFA students are evaluated at mid-semester and at the end of each semester by the faculty and supervisory staff where appropriate in their major. All students are expected to meet a professional standard of work, skill, and discipline. Punctuality and class attendance are mandatory. The faculty, and where appropriate, supervisory staff, is responsible for setting these standards and for guiding and evaluating each student's development. The Head of Concentration will decide, after consultation with the faculty and supervising staff, whether the student will continue in the program.

MFA GRADING POLICY:

Each discipline identifies courses which are core to the student's major. The grading policy for all required courses in the theater department are as follows:

7. Students are expected to receive a 'C+' or better in all required theater department courses to maintain good artistic standing in the department.
8. A grade of 'C' in one required course is grounds for Artistic Warning.
9. Two of more 'Cs' in one semester, or a grade of 'C' in one course over two consecutive semesters is grounds for Artistic Probation.
10. There is no grade of 'D' in the graduate program.
11. A grade of 'F' or 'U' in one required course, including a thesis project, is grounds for Artistic Dismissal. In the event the student is not dismissed, they will be placed on Artistic Probation. A grade of 'F' will not count towards the degree. The same course, or a comparable course approved by the department, will have to be successfully completed to fulfill the requirement for graduation.

MFA ACADEMIC REVIEW AND DISMISSAL:

In the MFA program, no student may receive more than 9 credits for courses in which he or she earned grades of 'C'.

Each discipline's graduate faculty reviews students' performance at the middle of the semester and at the conclusion of each semester. Students who have not maintained satisfactory academic or professional standards in any phase of the program may be dismissed for artistic reasons. Artistic dismissal is subject to review by the Dean of the school.

Official notification of *Academic Probation*, *Academic Warning* or *Academic Dismissal* is handled by the Mason Gross School of the Arts Scholastic Standing Committee. A student receiving notice of *Academic Dismissal* may appeal this action only by writing to the Mason Gross Scholastic Standing Committee.

A CONCLUDING NOTE:

As with the full Student Handbook this is a living document. All protocols, assessments and procedures are intended for your growth and to honor our mutual commitment to this work and the future.