

## THDA 799—Capstone Project Youth Drama and Secondary Theatre Education

The following is intended to give guidance to students who undertake Capstone Projects in Theatre and Dance. It is not intended as a series of absolutes.

### **Course Objective:**

These Capstone Project guidelines are designed specifically for students in the theatre education areas of theatre arts. This course offers students the opportunity to reflect upon and utilize the many theoretical ideas, practical skills, and artistry they have cultivated throughout their undergraduate studies. The course is meant to serve as a testing ground of the depth of students' knowledge and ability in the area of their choice.

### **Course Requirements:**

Students must satisfy the course objectives through the execution of a significant piece of performance, directing, or teaching project. Students are also required to submit two major pieces of writing: a research paper that also incorporates reflections and examples from the project; any written work (director's book, lesson plans, etc that relate to the Capstone Project). A final portfolio is also required of all graduating theatre education students (regardless of whether or not your project is theatre education-based); this portfolio should address all student objectives for their major option/s (to take effect Fall 2018-see p. 4 for SLO's). ***By the end of your first semester as a senior, you should post your resume and a cover letter on SchoolSpring.com or some other teacher-hiring site.*** Finally, students are required to participate in an oral defense of their artistic and written work before a panel of THDA faculty. This panel may also include qualified theatre artists. At least two people must serve on the committee: the advisor and someone appointed by the Department of Theatre and Dance. If the student wishes to have someone from their project site serve as the second advisor, s/he should make this clear on the departmental capstone application.

### **Performance and/or Teaching Work:**

Students enrolled in the emphasis areas of Youth Drama or Secondary Theatre Education who plan to get certification through the 5<sup>th</sup> year Education Department master program MUST do a capstone related to teaching. The project must contain teaching of some sort (or teaching-related activities such as directing) and be a challenging culmination of knowledge. If teaching, a theatre education major must have at least 10 contact hours of teaching with students for this project. \*\*In special circumstances, this criteria may be negotiated with the major advisor.

\*\*In special circumstances, majors may negotiate a variation to this project OR a switch to Senior Thesis. The student will meet with the major advisor and come to mutual agreement.

### **Dual Options:**

If you are a dual option in theatre but are NOT pursuing certification, you may propose a capstone that either combines your two options OR you may do your capstone in the non-theatre education option. This must be confirmed with both advisors.

### **Written Work:**

1. Students must submit a paper of no less than fifteen pages (additional length to be determined by the amount of other paperwork involved; e.g. lesson plans, director's book, etc). The paper should conform to accepted standards of academic writing. The department stresses that the student is required to submit both artistry and written work for this course. These papers should include anecdotal writing from the student's project experience, but they must also include clear evidence of research on a specific educational pedagogy thesis statement. The student must have six or more sources which must be academic and scholarly (either articles, research studies or books). ALL internet sources must be from academic sites produced by reputable organizations rather than sites posted by individuals, but these do not fulfill the minimum 6 source requirement. (Students may negotiate with the advisor for exceptions.) The student must submit at least two drafts for revision review by the advisor. At least

twice during the project, the student must have a face-to-face meeting with the advisor. **\*\*Research should begin before the creative project and the student should be able to sufficiently articulate how that research is informing her/his/their work with K-12 students.**

Pay attention to your writing and its structure. Use this as a guide:

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words.  
Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

So write with a combination of short, medium, and long sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't just write words. Write music.

-Gary Provost

2. **(Took effect fall 2018)** A culminating portfolio of major applicable project assignments from every theatre or education course should be neatly organized and presented in a published-ready version. You may choose to do this digitally as a personal website or PDF, but it could also be a physical binder. There are two purposes for this requirement: if you attend graduate school to get certification, you will need to have a portfolio of materials by the time you graduate with your Masters. Materials collected as an undergraduate will supplement the work you do as a graduate student. In addition, whether you pursue certification or not, having your materials organized and easily accessible in one place provides you with an impressive artifact to take with you on job interviews and as a valuable resource as you begin your teaching career. **This binder should include your final capstone paper and any other materials (either journals, directors' books or lesson plans) that you produce for THDA 799.**

#### **Oral Defense:**

The Student will request a primary advisor (who may or may not be granted); the secondary advisor will be assigned by the department. Advisors will evaluate the artistic project and read the submitted paper or script. The oral defense will last approximately one hour and must take place within a reasonable amount of time following the completion of the project. The Theatre Education major advisor will serve as one of the members of the panel. Additional members may come from the THDA department but may also include qualified theatre artists approved by the course advisor (this person might be the cooperating teacher for your project). All committee members should be chosen and approved before the project begins.

#### **Assessment (A grading rubric will be distributed when the contract is determined by advisor and student):**

The student will be assessed by the faculty panel in the following areas:

Performance/Teaching Portion:

- Overall quality
- Ability to exhibit command of artistic and technical skill
- Evidence of artistic growth
- Organization and planning

Written Work:

- Content addresses personal process and observations as they relate to academic research surrounding the project's topic
- Style and Appropriate Format consistently applied (MLA, APA etc)
- Overall Quality of research
- Evidence of growth/improvement through rewrites
- Ability to meet deadlines set by advisor

Oral Defense:

- Ability to clearly articulate and defend choices and ideas exhibited in the artistic portion and/or paper.
- Evidence of a clear understanding of the artistic and/or teaching processes apparent in the artistic portion and/or paper.
- Effectively presents portfolio as it fulfills student objectives for the student's option/s.

Students must meet with the theatre education advisor to set a contract of due dates for the different parts of their capstone. Specific times and other adjustments will be made at the discretion of the Capstone Project faculty advisor. Typically, the student would enroll during her/his/their final year, but due to teaching opportunities in the summer, students could do the project during the summer after junior year and register to write the paper in the fall. By at least the beginning of the semester prior to enrolling, the student should fix upon a topic with her/his theatre education advisor.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### **Core Student Learning Outcomes for the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre major:**

On completion of the B.A. in Theatre, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the development of Theatre or Dance through historical and literary study.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of important artistic works that shaped the evolution of theatre or dance.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and fundamental skill level of the basic areas of theatre or dance production, including various areas related to performance, design, technology or management.
4. Critically analyze literary, scholarly and artistic works related to theatre or dance.
5. Write with technical, analytical and artistic insight on theory, philosophy and/or artistry related to theatre or dance.

### **Additional Student Learning Outcomes for Option in Secondary Theatre Education:**

In addition to the shared department learning outcomes for all THDA students, upon completion of the major with an Option in Secondary Theatre Education, students will:

1. Develop and compile effective lesson plans and teaching materials appropriate to student developmental levels and individual learning styles.
2. Define a personal teaching philosophy.
3. Demonstrate effective teaching strategies.
4. Evaluate teaching abilities through analysis and reflection.
5. Develop directing and production skills.
6. Match to teaching materials the appropriate national educational standards for arts and non-arts subjects.

### **Additional Student Learning Outcomes for Option in Youth Drama:**

In addition to the shared department learning outcomes for all THDA students, upon completion of the major with an Option in Youth Drama, students will:

1. Develop and compile effective lesson plans and teaching materials appropriate to student developmental levels and individual learning styles.
2. Define a personal teaching philosophy.
3. Demonstrate effective teaching strategies and established skills as a group leader in dramatic activities.
4. Evaluate teaching abilities through analysis and reflection.
5. Demonstrate technical skills in storytelling and puppetry performance techniques.
6. Match to teaching materials the appropriate national educational standards for arts and non-arts subjects.