Drama Department Handbook

Vassar College

A guide to the curriculum, production program, opportunities, spaces, and shared responsibilities of the Drama community.

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1. Mission and Educational Philosophy

The Vassar Drama Department joins the study of theater with the practice of making it. Students work in theater history, dramatic literature, performance studies, and global theatrical traditions while learning through collaboration, experimentation, and sustained practice.

Acting, directing, dramaturgy, design, stage management, technical theater, and playwriting are taught alongside history, dramatic literature, global performance traditions, and theory. These areas inform one another and connect Drama to the student's broader liberal arts education.

The Experimental Theater is a laboratory for the bold exploration of form. It is not "experimental" because the department produces only avant-garde work, but because production asks students to test ideas, revise methods, learn from failure, and discover that artistic questions rarely have a single correct solution. Process, rigor, imagination, and play are all essential to this work.

The production season is one of the department's largest classrooms. Each production introduces a theatrical tradition and a set of artistic questions. It gives students a place to test classroom knowledge and lets the problems of practice send them back to study with better questions.

The Drama Department is an academic and artistic community built through collaboration among students, faculty, professional staff, administrative staff, and visiting artists. That collaboration extends across classrooms, rehearsals, shops, productions, meetings, and shared spaces. Everyone is expected to work with generosity, curiosity, openness, and respect and to help create conditions in which others can learn and take artistic risks.

These responsibilities matter especially in production. Department productions use a professional structure in which performers, directors, designers, dramaturgs, stage managers, and technicians work under faculty and staff mentorship. We intentionally hold this work to a high standard, both artistically and professionally, so that students learn to navigate the complexity, rigor, and shared responsibility of making theatre collaboratively. No contribution exists in isolation. Everyone must arrive prepared, communicate clearly, protect one another's safety, and understand how individual choices affect the company. The process matters as much as the outcome.

The Drama Department works proactively toward equity in its classrooms, rehearsal rooms, shops, performance spaces, and shared life. Students enter with different experiences, resources, bodies, and access needs. We welcome students to identify barriers and ask the appropriate instructor, faculty member, or staff member for support, as well as utilize campus resources such as the Accessibility and Educational Opportunities Office (AEO). Students are also responsible for helping their classmates and collaborators participate fully.

Consent is a foundational part of our artistic practice. It must be informed, specific, ongoing, and respected. When a department production includes staged intimacy, the department will provide an intimacy choreographer to establish and support consent-based practices. Students should never be pressured into physical contact or asked to undertake work that creates an avoidable risk of harm.

A commitment to equity, access, and consent does not mean that artistic or intellectual work will always be comfortable. The study and creation of theater may ask students to encounter difficult material, question familiar assumptions, attempt unfamiliar forms, and take meaningful artistic risks. We distinguish that productive challenge from coercion, discrimination, harassment, preventable physical danger, or disregard for a person's stated boundaries or access needs.

At Vassar, students will encounter classical and contemporary work from many traditions, including work that challenges audiences, experiments with form, or approaches performance in unfamiliar ways. We encourage students to explore the many artists, movements, practices, and cultural traditions that constitute theater's varied lineages. We also ask students to pursue courses, texts, production assignments, and artistic roles that extend beyond the work they already know or do comfortably.

Unfamiliar work can feel difficult or uncertain. That uncertainty is part of artistic growth. Compelling theatrical choices should be grounded in a firm understanding of the traditions they embrace or challenge. Knowing theater's histories gives students access to stronger choices.

A Brief History

The practice of theater at Vassar began in the English Department and grew through the work of Gertrude Buck, Winifred Smith (1904), and Hallie Flanagan, with the support of President Henry Noble MacCracken. Buck connected playwriting to performance; Smith insisted that dramatic literature was written to be seen onstage; and Flanagan sought a full curriculum in acting, directing, design, and theater history.

Hallie Flanagan founded the Experimental Theatre in 1930. After years of advocacy, Vassar approved an independent Drama major in 1939 and appointed Winifred Smith as chair. The department's continuing commitment to joining theatrical practice with dramatic literature, theory, history, and playwriting grows from this foundation.

Educational Philosophy of Production

The Drama curriculum and the Experimental Theater work in tandem. Department productions are curricular in nature: they test complex learning, analytical and critical thought, artistic technique, and collaborative practice in a laboratory production environment. Production assignments give students opportunities in acting; directing; stage management; costume, scenic, lighting, and sound design; dramaturgy; costume construction; scenic and prop work; electrics; and rigging.

Productions are selected for their pedagogical possibilities, their relationship to the curriculum, and the distinct artistic questions they allow students to encounter.

Pedagogical value may reside in a play's content, form, theatrical tradition, cultural context, or the particular artistic approach it invites. This educational focus is central to the department's season-selection process. Faculty also consider casting and design opportunities and the practical conditions that determine what the department can responsibly produce, including staffing, budgets, shop capacity, rehearsal and performance spaces, production calendars, safety requirements, licensing restrictions, and mentoring capacity. The needs of the other proposed productions and the department's recent production history are included in this assessment. These realities do not determine a work's

artistic or educational value, but they may determine whether and how it can be realized within a particular season.

Each year, the Drama Department undertakes a multi-stage process to select its production season. Drama majors, prospective majors, faculty, and staff may each anonymously propose one play for consideration. The faculty reviews the submissions and narrows them to approximately ten titles, considering the value of each work as well as its feasibility within the season.

The process ordinarily follows this general schedule, although specific dates may change each year:

- Early November: Anonymous play proposals are due.
- Mid-November: Juniors complete a senior thesis interest survey.
- Early December: Faculty review the submissions and create a shortlist.
- Early December: The department holds a town hall for rising seniors.
- Mid-December: The shortlist of approximately ten plays is released to the Drama community.
- Winter break: Everyone—factually, staff, and students— read the shortlisted plays.
- Mid-January: The department holds a town hall at which all students are invited to discuss the artistic and pedagogical possibilities of the shortlisted works.
- Early February: Faculty make the final season decisions based on pedagogical priorities and announce the season!
- Early March: Juniors submit proposals for senior projects connected to the selected season, including projects in acting, directing, design, dramaturgy, and stage management.
- Early April: The Department offers senior project assignments.

The faculty holds final responsibility for selecting the season. Community proposals and discussions are essential to the process, but no individual proposal, production, role, or senior project is guaranteed. The Steerman Festival of New Plays follows a separate selection and production process described on page 24 in this handbook.

The Drama Department's production program asks students to think beyond a single role or individual artistic interest and to participate responsibly in the larger process. A college production requires greater independence, shared authority, curricular accountability, and collaboration across areas. Students are not expected to become specialists in every area. They are, however, expected to learn about the range of theatrical disciplines, to try unfamiliar kinds of work, and to understand how their own role contributions depend upon the work of others.

This training matters beyond a career in theater. A production is a large project with many moving parts. Students learn to communicate across areas of expertise, adapt when conditions change, solve problems together, and carry an idea into public performance, all of which align with the values of a liberal arts education and benefit many lines of work"

2. Department People and Spaces

Department Leadership and Responsibilities

The academic department and the production program have a shared leadership structure. The Chair of Drama oversees the department's academic and administrative work. The

Director of Theatre oversees the production program. They work closely with the faculty and production staff to coordinate the department's curriculum, policies, resources, facilities, and artistic activity.

Chair of Drama: Peter Gil-Sheridan

The Chair is responsible for the department's academic and curricular administration. This includes guiding curricular planning, working with the faculty to establish departmental priorities and policies, overseeing the departmental budget, addressing issues involving departmental facilities, and representing Drama within the College.

The Chair also works with students on academic concerns, departmental policies, and issues affecting their experience in Drama courses or programs. When appropriate, students should first discuss a classroom concern with the instructor. Students may go directly to the Chair when they are uncomfortable approaching the instructor, when a concern remains unresolved, or when the matter involves conduct, equity, departmental policy, or a broader issue within the program.

Director of Theatre: Shona Tucker

The Director of Theatre oversees the department's production program. She coordinates the artistic and educational work of the season, oversees season casting and production meetings, administers the season-selection process, and addresses matters involving production spaces, scenic planning, rehearsal processes, and the relationship among productions. The Director of Theatre may also facilitate debriefs after each production, providing an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to reflect on the process and the production, both artistically and logistically.

Students should contact the Director of Theatre about production expectations, conflicts affecting their ability to fulfill a production assignment, and requests to miss a rehearsal, production meeting, design salon, technical rehearsal, performance, or other required production activity.

Production and Administrative Staff

The Production Manager, Technical Director, and Costume Shop Coordinator form the core of the department's technical and production management. They work closely with the Director of Theatre, faculty mentors, directors, designers, stage managers, and student crews.

Production Manager: Patience Haskell

The Production Manager coordinates the planning and execution of the production season. Her responsibilities include production schedules and budgets, designer coordination, student assignments in design and technical areas, mentorship of stage managers and production crews, and the organization of technical rehearsals.

She also coordinates load-ins and strikes, special events, production use of departmental facilities, and the installation and operation of sound and lighting systems. She works with the Technical Director and other production staff to maintain safety and regulatory compliance throughout the production process.

Technical Director: James Hunting

The Technical Director oversees the department's scene shop, technical operations, and scenic construction. He leads student build crews, coordinates the construction, installation, and removal of scenic elements, maintains tools and supplies, manages technical inventories and department vehicle use, and establishes safe practices for work in the shop and theaters.

He teaches DRAM 103: Introduction to Stagecraft, which introduces students to the department's scene shop, stages, tools, technical systems, and safe working practices. He shares responsibility for production safety and compliance with the Production Manager and other members of the production staff.

Costume Shop Coordinator: Leigh Davis

The Costume Shop Coordinator oversees the daily operation of the costume shop and the construction and alteration of costumes. Her responsibilities include draping, fittings, alterations, costume maintenance, and the supervision and training of student workers. She works with costume designers, faculty, production staff, and students to carry costume designs from concept through performance.

Departmental Administrative Assistant: Rosie Fritz Grabowska

The Departmental Administrative Assistant supports the academic and administrative work of the department. She maintains departmental calendars and records, coordinates the scheduling of classrooms, assists with registration and student information, supports honors reviews and departmental prizes, and assists the Chair.

She also administers student employment, including hiring and payroll, and supervises the administrative processes for research and classroom assistants. Because her office is located near the building entrance, she is also an excellent first point of contact for general questions and can direct students to the appropriate person.

Theater Relations Specialist: Joan Gerardi

The Theater Relations Specialist manages the department's relationship with its audiences and the public presentation of its work. She oversees the box office and supervises box-office staff. She coordinates publicity, posters, programs, social media, production photography, and special events.

She also administers departmental playwriting prizes and the Vassar Ticket Fund and coordinates security and fire-safety protocols for public performances.

Drama Majors Committee

The Drama Majors Committee is a volunteer group of students who represent student concerns, communicate with the faculty, and organize programming for majors and other students involved in Drama courses.This organization currently holds biweekly open meetings. All students are welcome to attend. Current representatives and contact information appear on the Drama website.

Officer positions within the committee are:

Chairperson - Ada Lovelace ‘27

Secretary - Jillian Cole ‘28 and Kaeleigh Heath ‘29

Academic Intern

Program Director - Mia Salopek ‘28

Performance Liaison - Masha Pozdniakova ‘28 and Eva Weiner ‘29

Junior Representative - Lucy Strandquist ‘28

Sophomore Representative - Kyle Frink ‘29 and Amelia Giordano ‘29

First Year Representative

Who Do I See?

Question or need	Who to see
Major requirements, advising, curriculum, or academic policy	Your faculty advisor or Peter Gil-Sheridan
A problem in a class	Your instructor, or Peter Gil-Sheridan if direct discussion is not appropriate or has not resolved the concern
Conduct, equity, or a broader departmental concern	Peter Gil-Sheridan
Production expectations or artistic and educational oversight	Shona Tucker
An excused absence from rehearsal, a production meeting, Design Lab, tech, or a performance	Shona Tucker and Patience Haskell
Production calendar, budget, assignments, stage management, crews, load-in, strike, or technical rehearsal	Patience Haskell
Scene shop, scenic construction, tools, technical training, the department vehicle, or shop safety	James Hunting
Costume construction, fittings, alterations, Costume Shop work, or Costume Shop employment	Leigh Davis
Student employment, payroll, registration, classroom scheduling, departmental records, or general directions	Rosie Fritz Grabowska
Box Office, publicity, posters, programs, social media, production photography, public events, or the Vassar Ticket Fund	Joan Gerardi

Faculty and Instructional Areas

Faculty members and instructors teach courses, advise students, mentor senior work, and support department productions in their areas of expertise. Students may consult any faculty member for guidance and are not limited to working only with their assigned major advisor.

- Tania Barrenechea: Scenic Design
- Anna Brenner: Directing
- Amanda Culp: Dramaturgy, Theater History and Theory
- Peter Gil-Sheridan: Playwriting
- Chelsea Gillespie: Stage Management
- Chris Grabowski: Directing
- Joanna Gurin: Theater History and Theory
- Kenisha Kelly: Costume Design
- P. Achiro Olwoch: Playwriting
- Conrad Schott: Acting and Performance
- Shona Tucker: Acting and Performance

Current faculty titles, contact information, office locations, and teaching assignments appear in the contacts directory at the end of this handbook and on the Drama Department website.

Department Communication

The Drama Department communicates with students through several channels. Different channels serve different purposes, and students are responsible for checking the communication systems used by their courses and production assignments.

Email and Direct Communication

Vassar email is the department's primary channel for official notices sent directly to students. The department uses email to communicate information about courses, registration, advising, production assignments, auditions, meetings, employment, deadlines, policy changes, and other academic or production matters. Students are expected to check their Vassar email regularly and respond when a message requires confirmation or action.

Faculty and staff are also available for direct conversation during office hours or by appointment. Phone communication may be used when a matter is urgent or time-sensitive, particularly during production.

Course Platforms and Shared Documents

Faculty members may use Moodle, Google Drive, or other digital platforms for syllabi, assignments, readings, schedules, feedback, and shared course materials. The combination of technologies used will vary by course. Each instructor will identify the official platforms for that course, and students are responsible for checking them regularly.

Productions may also use shared calendars, folders, contact sheets, rehearsal reports, design materials, or other collaborative documents. The production team will identify which resources are official and who is responsible for maintaining them.

Department Callboard

The physical Drama Department callboard is located outside the Streep Studio Theater. It is used for production notices, schedules, calls, auditions, opportunities, and other departmental announcements. Students should check the callboard regularly.

The department plans to establish a digital callboard. Until it is formally launched and announced, students should not assume that a digital posting has replaced the physical callboard or direct email communication.

Website

The Drama Department website, www.vassar.edu/drama, provides information about the curriculum, faculty and staff, productions, auditions, facilities, opportunities, and public events. Students should consult the website for general and publicly available information. Time-sensitive or course-specific instructions will ordinarily be communicated through email or the platforms designated by the instructor or production team.

Department Meetings

The department holds in-person meetings when necessary to discuss policy changes, academic matters, production concerns, and other issues affecting the Drama community. Meetings designated as required must be attended by all majors unless an absence has been approved. Department gatherings may also provide opportunities to share information, recognize accomplishments, and celebrate the community's work.

Department Spaces

The Drama Department manages the academic and production spaces assigned to it. Within the Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film, these include departmental classrooms, the Martel Theater and Mary Virginia Heinlein Stage, the Streep Studio, design and seminar rooms, costume facilities, dressing rooms, the scene shop, and storage areas. The department also manages the Hallie Flanagan Davis Powerhouse Theater, which is located in a separate facility. Student theater groups also use the Shiva Theater, which is not operated as a Drama Department classroom or production space.

The Martel Theater is a proscenium theater and classroom for the study of theater and performance. The Streep Studio is a flexible studio classroom used for acting, movement, lighting, workshops, readings, and small productions. The Powerhouse supports flexible seating configurations and experimental staging.

Building and Room Access

Drama majors have key-card access to the Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film during the building hours announced by the Department. Students enrolled in a Drama or Film course, as well as students working on a Drama Department production, also receive card access for the duration of that course or production assignment. Card access does not constitute permission to use every room or space in the building.

Key-card access for Drama Majors: All declared majors should have card swipe access to the CDF in the evenings starting after 5pm, and on the weekends. Students who find this is not the case should email Rosie with their name, and student id number, for her to submit this information to the card access office.

Key-Card access for non-majors: Students who have not declared as a Drama or Film majors will likely not have evening, and weekend card-swipe access to the building and spaces within the building. If this access is required for academic purposes please email Rosie with your name, student id number, the purpose for being in the building, and the dates/times access is required. If students registered in DRAM 200 require card-swipe access, they should provide the name and student id number to their Stage Manager who will submit a comprehensive list to Rosie.

Students may obtain authorized classroom keys from Rosie Fritz Grabowska. Keys must be returned promptly and may not be shared or transferred to another person. Students may not use classrooms, rehearsal rooms, theaters, shops, or other production spaces without prior authorization from the Chair of Drama or the Director of Theatre. Authorization to use a space applies only to the approved purpose and time.

The Drama Department does not permit independent live performances in its classrooms, rehearsal rooms, theaters, or other spaces. There is no application, petition, or room-reservation process through which a student or independent student group may request a departmental space for such a performance. Live performances in Drama Department spaces must be part of an officially scheduled course, Drama Department production, or departmentally sponsored program. This restriction is necessary to comply with College and Town of Poughkeepsie requirements governing fire safety, occupancy, security, accessibility, and supervision. Permission to use a room for classwork, rehearsal, or a meeting does not authorize a live performance or public gathering.

The Experimental Theater is the Drama Department's mainstage producing program. It ordinarily presents an annual season of three to four plays as well as the Steerman Festival of New Plays. Experimental Theater productions are curricular. They are selected and overseen by the faculty, supported by the department's professional production staff, and created by students working under faculty and staff mentorship. Students participating in these productions enroll in the appropriate production course and assume the responsibilities associated with their assignments.

The name Experimental Theater reflects the department's understanding of production as a laboratory for artistic and educational exploration, as described in the Mission and Educational Philosophy section. The Steerman Festival is part of the Experimental Theater season but follows its own selection and production process, described in this handbook.

Student Theatre is organized and governed by students and operates independently of the Drama Department's curricular production program. Its productions are extracurricular, do not carry Drama production credit, and are not selected, produced, or supervised by the Drama Department. Student Theatre primarily operates in the Shiva Theater, which is not managed as a Drama Department classroom or production space. Students participating in Student Theatre remain responsible for following applicable College policies and the rules governing the spaces and resources they use.

3. Declaring the Major and Advising

Declaring the Major

All students must declare a major by the end of the fourth semester. Students applying for education abroad must declare a major and be assigned a major advisor before applying; they should begin this process early in the fall of sophomore year.

To declare a Drama major, a student asks a Drama faculty member to serve as major advisor and develops a plan for completing the remaining requirements. After the advisor reviews the plan, the student completes the College's Major Declaration form.

Drama Major Planning Worksheet

Students complete this worksheet with a Drama faculty advisor before submitting the College's official Major Declaration form. The worksheet should be reviewed against the current Catalogue and Degree Works. It is a planning tool and does not replace the official degree audit.

Recommended sequence: DRAM 102, 103, and 120 in the first year; DRAM 221 and 222 in the sophomore year; and the seminar or approved senior project intensive in the final year. Other requirements may be completed in the order that best supports the student's goals, prerequisites, production work, and education-abroad plans.

Student: _____ Class year: _____ advisor: _____ Date: _____

Expected graduation: _____ Second major/correlate: _____
Education abroad: _____

Major Requirements

Timing	Requirement	Units	Course(s)	Term	Status	Advisor Notes
Recommended first year	DRAM 102: Introduction to Theater-Making	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Recommended first year	DRAM 103: Introduction to Stagecraft	0.5			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Recommended first year	DRAM 120: Fundamentals of Theatrical Design	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Recommended sophomore year	DRAM 221: Sources of World Drama	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Recommended sophomore year	DRAM 222: Sources of World Drama	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Flexible	200 or 300 level Dramatic Literature, Theater History, and Performance Studies Course	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Flexible	Production coursework at the 200 level or above	2.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Flexible	Drama, Film, or Dance electives at the 200 level or above	2.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Junior or Senior Year	300-level seminar	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	
Flexible	Any Intensive Unit (usually, but not always, completed as a Senior Project in Production)	1.0			☐ Planned ☐ Current ☐ Complete	

Four-Year Course Plan

Year	Fall Courses	Spring Courses	Planned Drama Units	Notes
First Year				
Sophomore				
Junior				
Senior				

Production Participation

Term	Course	Production	Assignment	Units

Senior and Degree Planning

Intended senior-project area: _____

Prerequisite pathway reviewed with advisor: ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

Possible faculty mentor(s): _____

At least 16 units outside Drama planned: ☐ Yes ☐ Review needed

At least 8 units outside the Arts Division planned: ☐ Yes ☐ Review needed

advisor comments: _____

Student and advisor reviewed this plan on: _____

The Role of the Advisor

Advisors help students plan a course of study, remain on track for the major and degree, and understand the alternatives available within the curriculum. An advisor may also offer guidance about graduate school and professional plans, although students are welcome to seek advice from any faculty member. Students do not need to choose an advisor in their favored theatrical discipline; a different perspective can be valuable.

Students are responsible for contacting advisors in advance of relevant deadlines. Advisor approval may be needed to add or drop a course, elect the Non-Recorded Option, preregister, request special permission, or plan education abroad. During preregistration, students should meet with advisors to review their plans and release advising holds.

When an advisor is away from the College for a semester or longer, the department will arrange temporary advising coverage. A student may request a different advisor at any time.

Planning Ahead

Declared and prospective majors should take DRAM 221 and DRAM 222 sequentially in the sophomore year. Students considering education abroad should plan particularly carefully so that required coursework and senior preparation can be completed on time. Proposed

study-abroad courses require advance approval. Drama students studying abroad may generally apply two preapproved credits toward Drama electives.

Students considering a double major should plan early. Irreconcilable conflicts between required courses can occur, particularly when education abroad compresses the time available. The College does not guarantee that every combination of majors can be completed; students are responsible for understanding and planning around the requirements of both programs.

Registration for Production

Students who intend to seek a production assignment should reserve room in their schedule for the appropriate credit-bearing course. Production assignments are easier to drop than to add after schedules are full, and the College generally reserves overloads for exceptional academic circumstances.

4. Curriculum and Major Requirements

Course requirements and offerings may change. Students must review the current Catalogue and Degree Works with their advisor when planning the major.

The Drama major requires 11.5 units. Foundational courses include DRAM 102 Introduction to Theater Making, DRAM 103 Introduction to Stagecraft (.5 unit), DRAM 120 Fundamentals of Theatrical Design, DRAM 221 and DRAM 222 Sources of World Drama. Majors also complete work in dramatic literature; theater history or performance studies; production; electives; and a senior project intensive.

Foundational Courses

- DRAM 102 – Introduction to Theater-Making: Theory and Practice
- DRAM 103 – Introduction to Stagecraft (.5 unit)
- DRAM 120 – Fundamentals of Theatrical Design
- DRAM 221 – Sources of World Drama
- DRAM 222 – Sources of World Drama

Dramatic Literature, Theater History, and Performance Studies

Majors complete two units in this area, including one 300-level seminar. Recent examples include DRAM 224 Introduction to Performance Studies: What Is(n't) Performance, DRAM 232 Dramaturgy, DRAM 234 Topics in Global Performance, DRAM 313 Historic Costume Collection and Exhibition, DRAM 336 Seminar in Performance Studies, DRAM 339 Shakespeare in Production, and DRAM 340 Seminar in Performance Studies: Artaud and His Legacy. The classes that fulfill these requirements **must be taught by Drama Department faculty**. Classes housed in other departments, but cross-listed with Drama, can be counted as elective credit only. Students should consult the current Catalogue and their advisor because topics and classifications change.

Production Coursework

Majors complete two units in production courses at the 200 level or above. Recent offerings include DRAM 200 Drama Department Production, DRAM 203 The Actor's Craft: The Study of Acting, DRAM 204 Theater Technologies: Stage Lighting, DRAM 205 The Actor's Voice, DRAM 207 Graphic Communications for Theater, DRAM 208 Draping and Pattern Development for Stage Production, DRAM 209 Introduction to Costume Design for the Stage, DRAM 227 Staging Intimacy and Violence, DRAM 304 The Art of Acting: Classics, DRAM 306 The Art of Acting: Comedy, DRAM 308 Auditioning and Acting for the Camera, and DRAM 390 Senior Project in Drama. Students should confirm current offerings and classifications with their advisor.

Electives and Senior Work

Majors complete two additional elective units at the 200 level or above in Drama, Film, or Dance and one unit of an approved intensive senior course. Independent studies may not replace courses required for the major.

College Distribution and NRO Rules

Students must complete at least half of their Vassar coursework outside the major and at least one quarter outside the curricular division of the major. For a 32-unit degree, this normally means at least 16 units outside Drama and at least 8 units outside the Arts Division. Advanced Placement credit does not satisfy this distribution requirement.

Courses available under the Non-Recorded Option are marked NR in the Schedule of Classes. Courses in a student's declared major may not be elected NRO.

Access, Religious Observance, and College Support

The Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity coordinates reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Accommodations are based on current disability-related needs, supporting documentation, and the specific requirements of the course, program, or activity. Students begin the process through AEO; accommodations apply after approval and are not ordinarily retroactive. Students are encouraged to communicate approved production-related accommodations early enough for the department and AEO to consider safe and effective implementation in classrooms, rehearsals, shops, and performance spaces.

Students may request reasonable academic accommodation for religious observance by contacting the instructor. Students are encouraged to make requests within the first two weeks of the semester, although requests may be made later; options can become more limited after add/drop. A student who is uncomfortable approaching the instructor may contact the Dean of Studies, and decisions may be appealed through that office. Accommodations do not remove responsibility for completing appropriate course work and may not fundamentally alter the course.

Vassar provides confidential support, supportive measures, reporting, and resolution options for people affected by harassment, discrimination, sexual assault, domestic or dating violence, or stalking. Students may seek confidential guidance through Counseling, Health Service, clergy/chaplains, Support, Advocacy, & Violence Prevent Office (SAVP), Care Coordination, Advocacy, Resources, and Education Office (CARE), or other designated resources, or may report to the Office for Institutional Equity. An emergency or immediate

safety threat should be reported to Campus Safety or 911. Because employee reporting responsibilities vary, students may ask about confidentiality before sharing details.

The department supports students in obtaining required course materials. Students who encounter financial barriers should consult the instructor and current College resources for affordable textbooks and course materials rather than forgoing required work without discussion.

Curricular Changes and Exceptions

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Vassar does not currently have one College-wide policy for generative AI. Its academic-integrity rules still apply. Students are responsible for everything they submit, including material created or revised with an AI tool.

An instructor may allow, limit, or prohibit AI use in a course, assignment, rehearsal, design process, research project, or production. Follow the policy in the syllabus or assignment. If it is unclear, ask before using AI.

Permitted AI use must be disclosed and cited as the instructor requires. Do not present AI-generated writing, images, research, dramaturgy, designs, sound, video, performance material, or production documents as unaided work. Never upload a script, rehearsal recording, design file, production photograph, classmate's work, or other unpublished departmental material to an AI system without authorization and, when another person's work or likeness is involved, that person's consent.

Petitions and Exceptions

When the faculty introduces a new major requirement, students who declare after the change are normally governed by the new curriculum. Current majors may be encouraged to follow the new curriculum but remain subject to the requirements in force when they declared, unless the College approves a different transition.

Students may request a waiver, course substitution, concurrent enrollment, or other exception to a Drama Department requirement through their major advisor or the Chair of Drama. Requests should be submitted in writing and should identify the specific exception requested, the reason for the request, and the student's proposed plan for completing the major.

No individual advisor, instructor, or Chair may approve an exception unilaterally. All requests must be discussed by the Drama faculty and approved by a majority vote. Approved and denied requests will be documented in an internal departmental record maintained by the Departmental Administrative Assistant, Rosie Fritz Grabowska, so that decisions can be applied consistently and accurately reflected in advising.

Exceptions are granted only in rare and compelling circumstances. A scheduling problem created by a double major, education abroad, delayed planning, or a student's failure to leave sufficient room for required coursework does not constitute justification for waiving or substituting a requirement. Students considering a double major or education abroad are responsible for planning early with their advisors.

Prior academic, artistic, or professional experience does not ordinarily exempt a student from required Drama coursework. Department courses are designed by professional artists and scholars and do more than provide practical training in a particular skill. They also develop historical, theoretical, critical, collaborative, and discipline-specific knowledge within the context of the Drama curriculum. Familiarity with one practical component of a course is therefore not, by itself, evidence that the course's educational goals have already been met.

The Department does not prescribe separate four-year tracks by artistic area. Follow the recommended sequence in the Drama Major Planning Worksheet and complete the remaining requirements in consultation with your advisor.

Students interested in pursuing a production-based senior project should work with their advisor to complete the prerequisite preparation required for that discipline. The Drama Major Planning Worksheet provides space for students and advisors to develop an individualized four-year plan.

5. Senior and Culminating Work

Most senior majors undertake DRAM 390, a substantial project completed with close faculty supervision in dramatic literature, theater history, performance studies, acting, directing, design, dramaturgy, or playwriting. Students are encouraged to collaborate. Practice-based projects include significant accompanying research and writing so that students demonstrate both artistic development and the ability to think and write critically about theater.

The department does not require a formal track for graduation. Students seeking a senior thesis in production apply during the junior year and must complete the designated prerequisite pathway for the proposed discipline. A production thesis is different from receiving a regular production assignment: it is a culminating course of study with a proposal, faculty mentorship, defined learning goals, and formal evaluation.

Senior Project Application and Selection

Students seeking senior projects submit an application during the junior year. The application asks students to provide current contact information and identify their first, second, and third choices for production assignments or senior-project areas. Students interested in only one area do not need to identify additional choices. Students applying in more than one area must complete every relevant section of the application.

All applicants list their prerequisites and previous Experimental Theater work, identify the artistic or educational challenge they want to pursue, and submit the materials required for their area.

Acting

Acting applicants submit a statement explaining why they are seeking a senior-project role, the formal or artistic challenges they hope to address, and the kinds of roles they are interested in exploring. Applicants should not limit themselves to a single role because several students may request the same assignment.

Actors also submit a self-taped audition of no more than two minutes. The annual application identifies the required material. Students should select material appropriate to the style, form, or tone of their first-choice production.

Prerequisites: DRAM 203 The Actor's Craft; DRAM 304/306 The Art of Acting: Classics/Comedy; DRAM 200 Drama Department Production in an Acting Role; One additional acting elective at the 200 or 300 level

Directing

Directing applicants identify the work or works they are interested in directing and explain the formal challenges they hope to undertake. They also submit a DRAM 102-style visual presentation containing images that communicate the production they hope to make. The presentation must be accompanied by a statement or image research explaining the applicant's artistic approach.

Prerequisites: DRAM 213 Stage Management; DRAM 211 The Director's Art; DRAM 200 Drama Department Production as a stage manager or assistant stage manager; DRAM 200 Drama Department Production as an assistant director

Design

Design applicants name their preferred production and design area, identify the challenge they want to pursue, and submit visual research with a brief explanation of how it informs the proposed design.

Prerequisites: DRAM 120 Fundamentals of Theatrical Design; DRAM 208 Draping and Pattern Development for Stage Production; DRAM 209 Introduction to Costume Design for the Stage; DRAM 200 Drama Department Production as an assistant designer; DRAM 225 Design Detectives: Uncovering History Through Architecture, Furniture Styles, and Decor; DRAM 323 Scenic Design

Stage Management and Technical Direction

Stage Management and Technical Direction applicants name their preferred production and describe the organizational, technical, or collaborative challenge they want to pursue.

Prerequisites: DRAM 213 Stage Management; DRAM 200 Drama Department Production as an assistant stage manager; DRAM 200 Drama Department Production as a stage manager; DRAM 211 The Director's Art

Dramaturgy

Dramaturgy applicants name their preferred production, explain the challenge they want to pursue, and describe their research process. Applicants interested in Steerman should also explain what draws them to new-play dramaturgy.

Prerequisites: DRAM 232 Dramaturgy; DRAM 210 Introduction to Playwriting; DRAM 200 as a Dramaturg

Playwriting and Scholarship

Students interested in a written senior project in Playwriting, Dramatic Literature, Theater History, Performance Studies, or another approved scholarly area indicate that interest in the application and meet with an appropriate faculty mentor after spring break to discuss the project's requirements and timeline.

Students seeking a senior project in Playwriting must complete DRAM 210: Introduction to Playwriting and DRAM 310: Advanced Playwriting. The project consists of developing and

completing a script under faculty mentorship. The script—not a production of it—constitutes the senior project. A senior playwright's script may also be selected for the Steerman Festival of New Plays, but the Steerman production is separate from the senior project and is not part of its evaluation.

Annual Timeline

- Mid-November: Juniors complete a senior-project interest survey.
- Early December: The department holds a town hall for rising seniors.
- Early February: The department announces the following year's season.
- Early March: Senior-project applications and required supporting materials are due.
- Early April: Senior-project offers are made.

Specific dates, production choices, available assignments, audition requirements, and application instructions are published annually.

Faculty Review and Offers

The faculty reviews senior-project applications collectively. Applications are considered in relation to the student's completion of prerequisites, previous coursework and production experience, the educational goals and preparation demonstrated in the application, the opportunities available within the selected season, production feasibility, and available faculty and staff mentorship.

At the conclusion of the review process, the faculty determines which senior projects the department can support and makes formal offers to selected students. Completing the prerequisites or submitting an application does not guarantee a senior project, a particular production, or a particular role or assignment.

Senior Project Leadership, Mentorship, and Authority

A senior project is both a culminating educational experience and an opportunity to exercise leadership within the Drama Department. Seniors are expected to model preparation, generosity, communication, accountability, and respect for every area of production. Their responsibility extends beyond their own project. Seniors are expected to support the work of the full department and to serve as ushers during the production season as assigned.

A senior project designation confers greater responsibility, not greater status or ownership of a production. Department productions remain training opportunities for every participating student, regardless of class year, role, or assignment. The artistic and educational needs of senior-project students must be considered alongside the learning opportunities and responsibilities of the entire company.

Each senior-project student works with an assigned faculty mentor. At the beginning of the project, the student and mentor establish expectations for communication, meetings, feedback, research, writing, and deadlines. Faculty mentors guide the educational development of the project, but the project also remains subject to the authority of the faculty, Director of Theatre, and production staff.

Senior Project Evaluation

Every senior completing a production-based senior project must submit a research paper of approximately twenty pages. The student selects the subject in consultation with the faculty, and the subject must be meaningfully related to the production, text, role, design, research

area, or production assignment. Paper expectations and deadlines are established when the senior-project assignment is made.

The faculty evaluates senior projects collectively. Evaluation considers:

- The substance, rigor, and development of the student's artistic or scholarly work
- Preparation, leadership, communication, and fulfillment of responsibilities
- Collaboration with fellow students, faculty, and production staff
- Responsiveness to mentorship and the student's development throughout the process
- The quality of the final research paper and its relationship to the project

The final evaluation reflects the complete senior-project process, not only the public performance or finished artistic product.

6. Department Productions

Auditions and Casting

Auditions for Experimental Theater productions are open to all Vassar students. Each semester, the Department formally records who auditions, who is cast, and the size and nature of the roles assigned. This information helps the faculty assess how performance opportunities are distributed across multiple seasons. Among the factors considered in casting is whether a student has previously been cast. When possible, the Department seeks to provide opportunities to students who have not yet had the chance to learn through performance.

When a role calls for a particular identity or lived experience, the Department may conduct additional outreach across campus to encourage appropriate students to audition. Such outreach does not prevent other students from participating in the audition process.

Casting and production assignments are educational decisions made in relation to student preparation, production needs, curricular goals, and the needs of the season as a whole. Student directors participate substantially in casting, but casting for student-directed work is not solely at the student director's discretion. Advising faculty retain authority to make or alter casting decisions when pedagogically necessary. Students proposing senior work in Acting will be required to audition.

Eligibility and Enrollment

Students do not need to be Drama majors to audition or participate in an Experimental Theater production. A student may participate in one Departmental production before completing DRAM 102 and DRAM 103. Subsequent participation requires completion of those courses unless the faculty has approved an exception. First year students may not take DRAM 200 in their first semester.

Every student participating in a Departmental production in any capacity must be enrolled in DRAM 200 or the senior-project course applicable to the assignment. Students who do not complete the required enrollment may not participate or continue with the production. There is no informal participation arrangement in place of course enrollment.

Faculty members may occasionally participate in productions as actors, directors, designers, or in other areas of their professional practice. This provides students with an opportunity to

work alongside experienced professional artists as part of the Department's educational program.

Production Assignments, Crew, Load-In, and Strike

Production assignments include Acting, Directing, Stage Management, Design, Dramaturgy, Playwriting, and technical work. Directors, playwrights, designers, stage managers, and technical directors ordinarily fulfill their production responsibilities through those assignments and do not receive an additional crew assignment. Actors ordinarily complete an additional technical or crew assignment.

Every student participating in a production must be available to take part in the load-in and strike for that production, if assigned.. The dates and times will be provided with the audition and production materials so that students understand these obligations before accepting a role or position. Failure to attend, arriving late, or leaving before the work is complete will negatively affect the student's final course grade unless an absence has been approved through the Department's excused-absence procedure. Approved academic conflicts with strike may be made up with future shop hours.

Rehearsal, Production Meeting, and Performance Commitments

Regular rehearsals take place Monday through Thursday from 7:15 to 10:45 p.m. Production meetings are scheduled on Fridays at various times between 9:00 a.m. and noon. Students accepting production assignments must keep these periods available, along with all announced technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, performances, load-ins, strikes, and other required calls.

The complete rehearsal, technical, performance, load-in, and strike schedule is established at the beginning of each semester and made available as part of the audition and assignment process. Students should disclose known conflicts or requests for consideration on the audition form. Disclosure does not by itself make an absence excused; any absence from a required call must also be approved through the procedure below.

Friday production meetings are required for directors, stage managers, playwrights, designers, senior-project participants, and the designated cast representative. Student directors and stage managers submit the coming week's rehearsal schedule to the Production Manager each week.

Students must disclose all Student Theatre productions in which they are participating, including the dates of technical rehearsals and performances, no later than the first Departmental rehearsal. Student Theatre rehearsals, technical rehearsals, and performances are not excused conflicts with Departmental production obligations. If a Student Theatre commitment overlaps with the established Departmental schedule, the student must arrange to change that commitment or decline the Student Theatre role or assignment. Departmental directors and stage managers are not expected to reorganize rehearsals around Student Theatre conflicts.

An unapproved absence caused by a Student Theatre conflict constitutes a failure to fulfill the requirements of the course. It may result in the student's replacement in the production and a failing course grade. This policy does not replace the Department's procedures concerning illness, emergency, religious observance, disability-related accommodations, or other circumstances recognized by College policy.

Requesting an Excused Absence

To request an excused absence from a rehearsal, production meeting, Design Lab, technical rehearsal, performance, load-in, strike, or other required production activity, a student must email both Shona Tucker, Director of Theatre, and Patience Haskell, Production Manager. The request should be submitted as soon as the student becomes aware of the conflict or circumstance.

The Director of Theatre determines whether the absence is excused. Notifying a director, stage manager, professor, or another member of the production team does not by itself constitute approval. An absence for which this process has not been followed will be recorded as unexcused.

In the event of an illness or emergency that makes advance notice impossible, the student must contact Shona Tucker and Patience Haskell as soon as reasonably possible.

Scripts and Acceptance of a Role

Students must read the complete script before accepting a role or production assignment. Acceptance signifies a commitment to participate in the production and to engage with the authorized text as written. Questions or concerns about the material should be raised before the assignment is accepted.

Students may not unilaterally alter the text or decline to perform particular lines after accepting a role. Any change to a licensed script must be authorized through the production's established artistic and rights-clearance processes. A student who subsequently refuses to perform the authorized text may be removed from the production and may receive a failing grade in the associated course.

Faculty and Staff Access to Rehearsals

Departmental rehearsals are curricular spaces and are open to members of the Drama faculty and staff for purposes of observation, mentorship, production support, and evaluation. Faculty members may visit rehearsals and offer feedback during the process. They will generally inform the production team before attending, although advance notice is not guaranteed. Intimacy rehearsals follow the separate closed-room protocols described below and are not open rehearsals.

Production Community Standards and Agreement

Students participating in Department productions are expected to arrive prepared and on time, communicate promptly and responsibly, respect the work and expertise of their collaborators, follow the established artistic and production structures, respond constructively to mentorship, and fulfill every rehearsal, meeting, technical, performance, crew, load-in, and strike obligation associated with their assignment.

The syllabus for DRAM 200 and the applicable senior-project courses will be reviewed at the beginning of each semester and revisited at the first rehearsal. Students will be asked to sign a production agreement confirming that they have read and understood the syllabus, production calendar, attendance expectations, meeting obligations, script requirements, safety procedures, community standards, and other conditions of participation. Signing the agreement does not waive a student's rights under College policy. It confirms that

participation in a Departmental production is both an artistic commitment and an academic course obligation.

Where to Bring Questions and Concerns

Students should ordinarily begin with the person responsible for the relevant area. A student who is uncomfortable approaching that person may instead speak with another member of the Drama faculty or staff, the student's Class Advisor, or the Dean of Studies Office. Students are not required to address a serious concern solely through the person involved in that concern.

- Artistic questions or conflicts: the director, followed by the faculty mentor or Director of Theatre.
- Rehearsal scheduling, attendance, or absence requests: the stage manager for immediate scheduling communication, and Shona Tucker and Patience Haskell by email when an excused absence is requested.
- Production calendar, workload, budget, technical coordination, load-in, strike, or production logistics: Patience Haskell, Production Manager.
- Scene-shop practices, tools, construction, technical operations, or shop safety: James Hunting, Technical Director. Urgent production-safety concerns may also be brought to Patience Haskell.
- Costume construction, fittings, alterations, or Costume Shop practices: Leigh Davis, Costume Shop Coordinator.
- Academic requirements, curriculum, classroom concerns, advising, grading, or faculty conduct: the instructor or advisor when appropriate, followed by Peter Gil-Sheridan, Department Chair. If the concern involves the Chair, students may approach the Director of Theatre, another faculty member, their Class Advisor, or the Dean of Studies Office.
- Department records, registration administration, or student hiring and payroll administration: Rosie Fritz-Grabowska, Departmental Administrative Assistant.
- Accessibility or disability-related accommodations: the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, together with the relevant instructor or production leadership as appropriate.
- Health concerns: Health Services or Counseling Services. Any resulting production absence or adjustment must also be communicated through the Department's absence procedure.
- Discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, exploitation, or retaliation: the Office for Institutional Equity, or any faculty or staff member. Students seeking confidential support should use a College-designated confidential resource, including Counseling Services, Health Services, Care Coordination, the CARE Office, SAVP or an SAVP Advocate, or Religious and Spiritual Life.
- An immediate threat, medical emergency, fire, or other urgent danger: call 911 or Campus Safety immediately, then notify the stage manager and appropriate Department leadership when it is safe to do so.

Except for employees formally designated by the College as confidential resources, Vassar faculty and staff are mandated reporters. A faculty or staff member who learns of possible discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence, stalking, exploitation, or retaliation must share the available information with the Office for Institutional Equity. Students should therefore be informed of an employee's reporting responsibility before disclosing details whenever reasonably possible.

After receiving a report, the Office for Institutional Equity ordinarily contacts the person identified as having experienced the conduct. That outreach provides information about supportive measures, available resolution options, rights under College policy, and campus and community resources. The individual is not required to meet with the Office, and obtaining supportive measures does not require filing a formal complaint or participating in an investigation.

The Office for Institutional Equity can be contacted via email: equity@vassar.edu, or by phone: (845) 437-7924.

Staged Violence and Intimacy

All staged violence must be developed with an appropriately qualified fight choreographer. All scenes designated as involving intimacy must be developed with the production's intimacy choreographer. Intimacy generally refers to simulated sex acts, intimate physical contact, and nudity or hyperexposure. In our department, kissing qualifies as intimacy.

Faculty, guest, and student directors may not stage or rehearse designated intimate material before the actors have worked with the intimacy director. Choreography sessions for intimate material are closed working sessions involving only the necessary collaborators: the intimacy director, the relevant performers, and perhaps the director and/or stage manager, depending on the desires of the performers.

An actor may confidentially ask the intimacy choreographer or stage manager to advocate for a certain boundary or to limit attendance while a particular moment is being developed. All collaborators are responsible for maintaining a culture of consent by observing and respecting one another's boundaries. Consent remains specific, informed, and ongoing throughout rehearsal and performance.

Fight calls must be held prior to any run-through or performance in which the violence is intended to go at show speed. Intimacy calls are not always necessary but may be held at the discretion of the performers; a simple check-in may suffice.

7. Production Practices and Community Standards

Callboards and Production Communication

The Box Office updates the physical callboard weekly. Production-specific notices may also be distributed by email, rehearsal report, shared calendar, or the designated digital callboard. If sources conflict, students should follow the most recent direct official communication from the production team and promptly ask the Stage Manager or Production Manager to resolve the discrepancy.

Rehearsal and Performance Reports

Daily rehearsal and performance reports are official production communications. Every member of the production team—including faculty, staff, directors, designers, playwrights, dramaturgs, stage managers, actors, and other assigned students—is expected to read each report thoroughly and promptly, attend to any action item addressed to them, and communicate when a correction or response is needed.

Costume Fittings

Actors are responsible for responding promptly to costume-shop requests, providing student class schedules, required fittings, and arriving on time and prepared. Failing to confirm a fitting, arriving late, or missing a fitting without an approved absence will negatively affect the student's production-course grade.

Publicity and Documentation

Directors and senior-project teams meet with department publicity staff to plan posters, programs, website information, and social media. Publicity materials are archived. Access to production materials may be limited by licensing agreements and is not permission for redistribution.

8. Steerman New Play Series

The Steerman New Play Series presents student-written original short and full-length plays each spring. It reflects the department's commitment to new work and gives student playwrights the essential opportunity to see their writing realized in performance.

James B. Steerman joined Vassar's Drama faculty in fall 1967 and retired as Professor Emeritus of Drama and Film in early 2011. He taught dramatic literature, playwriting, and film; helped establish Film as a department; chaired Drama and Film; wrote for stage and screen; and helped create an annual student playwriting competition. The series honors his contributions.

Steerman is a curricular production process. Participants enroll in the course appropriate to their assignment and remain in regular contact with their faculty or staff mentor. Playwrights participate in production meetings and revise according to an agreed schedule. Directors collaborate with playwrights while helping the production remain achievable. Designers work within shared repertory, schedule, space, and budget constraints. Dramaturgs support communication among the playwright, director, and production team.

Except where a Steerman-specific application or selection procedure is identified below, Steerman productions follow the same rehearsal, production-meeting, design, technical, safety, enrollment, attendance, load-in, strike, and community standards as other Experimental Theater productions.

Eligibility and Applications

Students do not need to be Drama majors to apply to Steerman. Playwright applicants must have completed DRAM 200: Drama Department Production, whether or not the submitted script is also being developed as a senior project. The requirements for a Playwriting senior project are separate and include the foundational courses required of Drama majors.

A student may apply to direct a Steerman play either as an approved senior project in Directing or as a non-senior production assignment. Director applicants must have completed DRAM 305: Director's Art or have served as an Assistant Director to a faculty director during their time at Vassar.

Applications for Steerman playwrights and directors are released during the fall semester and are due December 1. Selection for Steerman does not by itself constitute approval of a

senior project; senior-project applications and offers follow the separate process described in the Senior and Culminating Work section.

9. Opportunities, Employment, and Funding

Student Employment

The Department is committed to a transparent and equitable hiring process. Opportunities should be announced broadly and evaluated through a common process rather than distributed according to informal access, personal connections, or who happens to know about an opening. Department employment falls into three general areas: classroom assistance, research assistance, and production employment, including work in shops, the Box Office, publicity, and other production-support areas.

In accordance with Vassar's student-employment procedures, students eligible for work-study receive priority during the initial hiring period. For the 2026–27 academic year, the standard departmental employment application is due by 8:00 p.m. on September 4. This deadline will be reviewed and updated annually. Returning appointments and employment commitments made before this process was adopted will be honored during the transition; moving forward, students must apply through the applicable work-study or departmental application. Applications will be evaluated by the relevant supervisor, and an interview may be required.

Department student jobs may include research and teaching assistance, scene and electric shop work, costume shop work, box office and publicity, Vassar Ticket Fund coordination, and photography or videography. Current openings are posted and processed through JobX.

A student must complete employment clearance, including Form I-9, before performing any work. Work may not begin, and retroactive payment may not be issued, before clearance is complete. After hiring, students use Workday for onboarding, recording hours, and submitting timesheets. Students are responsible for accurate and timely entries; supervisors review and approve them.

Student Employment-funded positions currently have a maximum of 120 hours per semester. Because allocations and registration periods can change, students and supervisors must consult the current Student Employment calendar and monitor hours in Workday.

Available Positions:

Research Assistants Job id 5385:

Assisting faculty members with accessing research materials for their writing, among other activities. Research Assistants are able to access printers without using VPrint. This position is for the duration of the academic year

Course Assistants Job id 5962:

Assisting the instructor of a specific class to compile course materials, receive submitted materials from students in the course, and connecting students with supplemental materials and resources necessary to the course work. Teaching Assistants are able to access printers

without using VPrint, and should also be listed on the course's Moodle site. This position lasts for the semester the course is offered and terminates once the class has ended. It is preferable that students applying for a Course Assistant position have previously taken the course.

Drama Theatrical Journeyman Job id 5317

Assist the shop technician; maintain and clean the scene shop, and prop room; construct, and deconstruct scenery; hang lighting. A qualified candidate must have the skills to use tools safely; must be able to read and execute lighting plots, and ground plans. Students must be able to work independently, and in collaboration with. A student who has completed DRAM 103 Intro to Stagecraft is preferred.

This position is for the duration of the academic year

Lighting and Sound Specialist Job id 5316

This person will be in charge of the lighting and sounds areas. Because of the increase in both the number and sophistication of the lighting units, and control systems, and due to the increase in sophistication of the sound equipment, reliability and dedication are required.

This position is for the duration of the academic year

Costume Shop Assistants Job id 6697

Sew and/or alter costumes and construct accessories for drama department productions; maintain costume stock; assist costume designer during fittings and do any general services to aid in the function of Costume Shop. Shop Techs also serves one department production wardrobe crew per semester. Must have basic knowledge and experience sewing, making garments, using a sewing machine. Experience using commercial sewing patterns and with technical theater is helpful. Responsible, dependable individuals able to take directions and work independently. Must be willing to devote as much time to the job as needed.

This position is for the duration of the academic year

Costume Collection Assistant Job ID 6292

Help with the management, maintenance, and research of the historic clothing collection, housed in the costume shop. Students will work to assist in maintaining over 640 items of clothing dating back to the early 19th century. This individual will also maintain the collection's online database, the accession of new donations, as well as the stabilization of historic garments to maintain their longevity. Attention to very fine detail, the ability to learn new skills as needed, and the ability to work independently is desired. This position will require checking and recording the environmental conditions of the storage space on a weekly basis; properly re-boxing object in smaller, acid-free boxes packed with acid free tissue; cataloging new donations with detailed information, re-cataloging objects already in the collection with greater detail; researching the history of the object in the collection; photographing the objects as part of their documentation; assist in entering photographs and text into our online database; assist in displaying small groups of objects for class visits; helping to mount larger displays for periodic gallery shows; assist in repairing select costume objects with simple stabilization sewing techniques.

This position is for the duration of the academic year.

Costume History and Design Research Assistant Job ID 5195

Sew and/or alter costumes and construct accessories for drama department productions; maintain costume stock; assist costume designer and do any general services to aid in the function of the costume shop. Applicants must have basic knowledge of and experience in sewing and making garments using a sewing machine and preferably commercial patterns. Experience with technical theater is helpful. Responsible, dependable individuals who are able to take directions and work independently are perfect candidates. Must be willing to devote as much time to the job as needed.

This position is for the duration of the academic year.

Box Office Staff Job id 5458

Student Box Office assistants work with and back up the Department Staff Box Office Manager with all forms of publicity and box office needs as well as House Management backup. Ushering and being available for all dept production dates to assist the Box Office Department Staff Manager. This includes; Take phone reservations, organize front of house performance needs, Assist with design and distribution of posters, postcards. Computer experience with photoshop and good communication skills are important. Assist with some errands-delivering and copying-related to box office and needs. This position is for the duration of the academic year

Drama Ticket Fund Coordinator Job id 6769

The student worker will be working alongside and overseen by the Drama Staff Box Office Specialist to organize trips to performances in NYC, and other areas.

An organized individual is a perfect candidate. Must be proficient with communication via email, google forms and use of excel. Must be able to take direction and work independently as needed and meet deadlines.

This position is for the duration of the academic year

Photographer/Videographer Job id 5191

Photograph play rehearsal, performances, special events and other areas as needed for the Drama Department website and archive. Experience shooting a live performance is preferred but not required. The student must be able to take direction from the supervisor and performance directors well. The student should be confident and able to work independently. Communication skills are essential. Must have their own camera equipment & photography skills. The student should be flexible with availability evenings and weekends for performances. Generally, Wed-Sunday approximately 12 times per semester.

This position is for the duration of the academic year

Interview Process

Research/Classroom Assistants:

The faculty member requesting an assistant will contact applicants to schedule an interview.

Costume Shop

You will be asked to fill out a google form questionnaire, whether you have applied through JobX or expressed interest in person, or through email.

Box Office, Photographer, Vassar Ticket Fund

These positions require an in person interview after a student submits through JobX through Student Employment.

JYA once you hold a position

Students studying abroad must vacate their work study positions. At the supervisor's discretion the student may be rehired upon return. Students should plan to discuss their options with their immediate supervisor.

Credit, Wages, and Volunteer Work

The department's aim is that substantial student production labor be recognized through academic credit or wages. Students should not begin work based on an informal promise of later credit or payment. Any exceptional arrangement must be authorized and recorded in advance.

Funding and Professional Development

Departmental Funding

There is limited funding for departmental opportunities. The Department uses a common application for departmental student funding opportunities. [The annual application is due January 15. March 1?] Available funds, eligible expenses, award limits, approval requirements, and reimbursement instructions are announced with the application. Students must receive approval before making purchases or commitments for which they expect departmental reimbursement.

Powerhouse and Other Opportunities

Although the Powerhouse Theater Training Program is not formally part of the Drama Department, students are encouraged to consider it. Powerhouse offers an intensive six-week, conservatory-style summer program in Acting, Directing, and Playwriting. Training combines discipline-specific classes with production work, workshops, master classes, observerships, and access to the professional Powerhouse season and the development of new work. Powerhouse maintains its own application, admission, tuition, and financial-aid procedures.

The Department also shares relevant information about summer and local opportunities, outside internships, visiting artists, workshops, auditions, conferences, and professional development through its department-wide opportunities folder and official communications. Students should consult current postings because deadlines and eligibility vary.

Vassar Ticket Fund Attendance and Cancellation Policy

The Vassar Ticket Fund is co-managed by the Department of Drama (the Drama Ticket Fund) and the Office of Campus Activities (Vassar Ticket Fund). The fund facilitates the Vassar community's attendance at theatrical performances both on Broadway, off-Broadway and regionally in an effort to expand on coursework and expose students to an often unattainable art form.

A student who accepts a place on a Vassar Ticket Fund trip is responsible for attending. If the student becomes unable to participate for any reason, the student must notify Joan Gerardi, the Vassar Ticket Fund Program Coordinator, and arrange for a current Vassar student or alum approved by the Department to attend in the student's place.

A student who does not attend and fails to arrange an approved replacement will be barred from participating in the program for one calendar year. Students may not transfer a ticket or trip reservation independently; every replacement must be communicated to and approved by Joan Gerardi.

10. Awards and Honors

Departmental Honors and Prizes

No formal student application is required for Departmental Honors or for departmental prizes other than the two playwriting prizes described below. The faculty determines honors and prize recipients according to the criteria established for each recognition.

Available Prizes:

The Molly Thatcher Kazan Memorial Prize: For distinction in the theater arts, in recognition of one distinguished work during their time at Vassar.

The Evelyn Olive Hughes Prize in Drama: To an outstanding junior drama major for a summer study of acting abroad

The Marilyn Swartz Seven Playwriting Award: to a junior or senior in any discipline who submits the best dramatic work written for the stage. This prize uses a common application which is due January 15. Submissions are anonymous and are adjudicated by external readers who are alumni and professionals in the field, not by Drama faculty or staff. Additional guidelines are announced early in the fall semester. Questions may be directed to Peter Gil-Sheridan, Joan Gerardi, or Rosie Fritz Grabowska.

The Phillip Cook Aspiring Playwright Prize: Awarded to a sophomore, junior, or senior in any discipline who submits the best full-length play, pair of one act plays, or musical theater work. This prize uses a common application which is due January 15. Submissions are anonymous and are adjudicated by external readers who are alumni and professionals in the field, not by Drama faculty or staff. Additional guidelines are announced early in the fall semester. Questions may be directed to Peter Gil-Sheridan, Joan Gerardi, or Rosie Fritz Grabowska.

The Emily M Scheuer Shakespeare Theater Endowment: To establish an internship for students to participate in the Washington D.C. area

The Pat Cain '68 and Jean Love Broadway & Abroad Endowed Fund: to endow an internship fund to support Drama students' internships in Broadway, regional, and/or theater in other countries (abroad).

Criteria for Departmental Honors: A cumulative GPA of 3.75 or better, a department GPA of 3.75 or better, and 2 areas of distinction as identified by voting members of the faculty.

11. Department Policies, Spaces, and Resources

Space Reservations

Students may request Drama-controlled rehearsal and classroom spaces for assigned academic work that cannot be completed during the course meeting. Requests are submitted to the department's administrative office with the instructor copied and should be made as soon as the student is aware of their need, preferably 7 days in advance but every effort will be made to accommodate the request. Requests for non-Drama spaces require fuller setup and facilities information and may require additional lead time. Theater spaces are not available for unsupervised student reservation.

Students must leave a reserved space ready for the next user and in at least as good a condition as they found it. Failure to reset or care for a space may result in temporary loss of reservation privileges.

Checkout and Equipment

Props, costumes, tools, technical equipment, and other departmental materials may not be removed, borrowed, altered, or used outside their assigned course or production without prior authorization from the staff member responsible for that area, or approval from an instructor for the sake of a classroom assignment. Students must follow the current checkout, training, supervision, return, cleaning, storage, loss, damage, and restricted-item procedures communicated by the scene shop, costume shop, or Production Manager.

Self-Tape Booth

The department owns and maintains self-tape equipment which is stored in the booth of the Streep Studio. This equipment is for classroom use but may be used by students to record self-tape auditions. The equipment includes a camera, a monitor, lights, backdrops, tripods, microphones, and various accessories. For help setting up and understanding the equipment, please reach out to Ivy Klein. All equipment must stay in the Streep and must be reset after use. Failure to properly store the equipment and restore the space to neutral will result in a ban from use of the self-tape booth. Students wishing to use the space and equipment must make a reservation through Rosie Fritz-Grabowska. The space may be reserved for no longer than 90 minutes for a self-tape audition; come prepared, and reserve enough of your time for set-up and break-down.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, call 911 and the Campus Response Center at (845) 437-7333. Give your name, exact location, callback number, and the nature of the emergency, and remain on the line until instructed to disconnect. Campus Safety dispatches Vassar College Emergency

Medical Services when appropriate. Do not move an injured person unless the person is in immediate danger.

When a fire alarm sounds, leave by the nearest safe exit, use stairs rather than elevators, close doors behind you when it is safe to do so, report to the designated assembly area, and do not reenter until authorized. During a campus siren or shelter-in-place instruction, remain in or enter a building and monitor official College alerts. Everyone using departmental spaces should know the nearest exits, alarm pull stations, emergency phones, extinguishers, and assembly locations.

Students may use shops, tools, lighting and sound systems, rigging, or other technical equipment only after the required training and with the authorization and supervision established for that area. Report every injury, near miss, damaged tool, unsafe condition, blocked exit, or other safety concern immediately to the supervising faculty or staff member and the Production Manager or Technical Director. The Department intends to make first-aid training available to interested students, faculty, and staff; details will be announced when scheduled.

Resetting Classrooms, Rehearsal Rooms, and Performance Spaces

Because classrooms, rehearsal rooms, and stages are shared teaching and performance spaces, every class and company must restore the room to its posted neutral condition after each use. A photograph or diagram in each space identifies the required furniture and equipment arrangement. Resetting is a shared responsibility: it does not fall exclusively to the stage manager, classroom assistant, instructor, director, or group leader. Every member of the class or company is expected to participate.

Instructors, directors, and group leaders must plan enough time for the full reset within the allotted class or rehearsal period. Furniture and equipment must be returned safely, exits and paths of egress kept clear, and all personal belongings and materials removed. All garbage—especially food waste—must be carried to public trash receptacles outside the room. Food waste may not be left in a classroom or rehearsal-room trash can because these spaces are serviced weekly rather than daily.

Props, equipment, and other materials specific to a course or production must be returned to the designated storage area in the room or to the assigned off-site storage location. Students should consult Patience Haskell to confirm the storage space assigned to their class or production. A group that repeatedly fails to reset or care for a space may lose access or reservation privileges.

Photography, Video, and Social Media

Students receive an image and recording consent form when they audition for a Department production. Participation in a production includes consent, subject to that form and College policy, for official production photography and for a student's likeness to appear in Department publicity, social media, and public-facing websites. After a production closes, a student may ask Joan Gerardi to remove an image from Department controlled social media or a Department controlled public website. The Department will make reasonable efforts to honor the request where it controls the material.

Scenes involving intimacy choreography will not be photographed or recorded. Students, faculty, and staff may not photograph or make audio or video recordings of any part of a class or rehearsal, or post such material publicly, without the prior written consent of the

Director of Theatre and every person identifiable in the media. Official rehearsal and production photography by a Vassar or Department photographer will be scheduled in advance.

Departmental production and event media may be reviewed by request through Joan Gerardi. Productions are recorded for archival purposes, but students may not retain, copy, publish, or use archival recordings in a professional portfolio, website, social media account, or other public context. A student who appears alone in an excerpt may request that portion for personal use, subject to licensing, consent, and Department approval. The student is responsible for identifying the material and completing any editing, transfer, permission, or cost requirements associated with the request.

12. Contacts and Official Resources

Drama Department: Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film, Room 108; (845) 437-5250; drama@vassar.edu. Box Office: Powerhouse Theater; (845) 437-5599; boxoffice@vassar.edu. Current faculty and staff listings appear at www.vassar.edu/drama/faculty-staff.

Because personnel, links, course offerings, deadlines, and College policies change, this handbook should be read together with the current Vassar College Catalogue, Schedule of Classes, Degree Works, Drama Department website, Registrar, Dean of Studies, Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, Title IX Office, International Programs, and Student Employment.

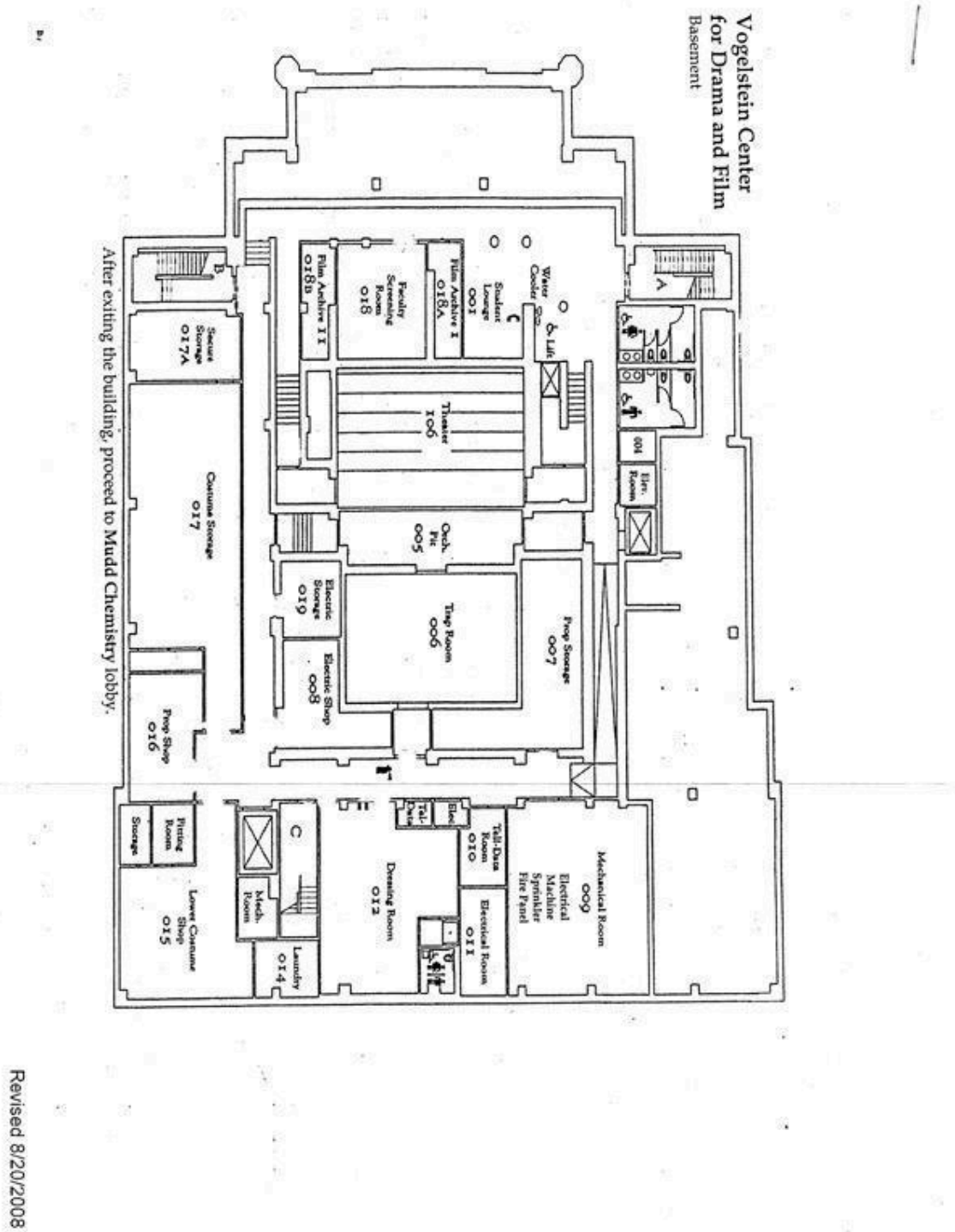
Official Resources

- Drama Department: https://www.vassar.edu/drama
- Drama curriculum and requirements: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/courses-requirements
- Drama auditions: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/courses-requirements/auditions
- Experimental Theater: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/courses-requirements/experimental-theater
- Drama Majors Committee: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/courses-requirements/majors-committee
- Drama history: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/history
- Facilities: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/facilities
- Steerman New Play Series: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/productions/steerman-new-play-series
- Annual playwriting awards: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/courses-requirements/playwriting-competition
- Registrar: https://offices.vassar.edu/registrar/
- Dean of Studies: https://offices.vassar.edu/dean-of-studies/
- International Programs: https://offices.vassar.edu/international-programs/
- Student Employment: https://offices.vassar.edu/student-employment/guides/
- Accessibility and Educational Opportunity: https://offices.vassar.edu/accessibility-and-educational-opportunity/
- Office for Institutional Equity: https://offices.vassar.edu/institutional-equity/reporting-an-incident/
- Religious accommodations guidance: https://offices.vassar.edu/religious-and-spiritual-life/

- Vassar emergency procedures: https://offices.vassar.edu/campus-safety/procedures/
- Generative AI guidance: https://library.vassar.edu/gen-ai
- Powerhouse Theater Training Program: https://www.vassar.edu/powerhouse/training-program
- Drama contacts: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/contact
- Drama faculty and staff: https://www.vassar.edu/drama/faculty-staff

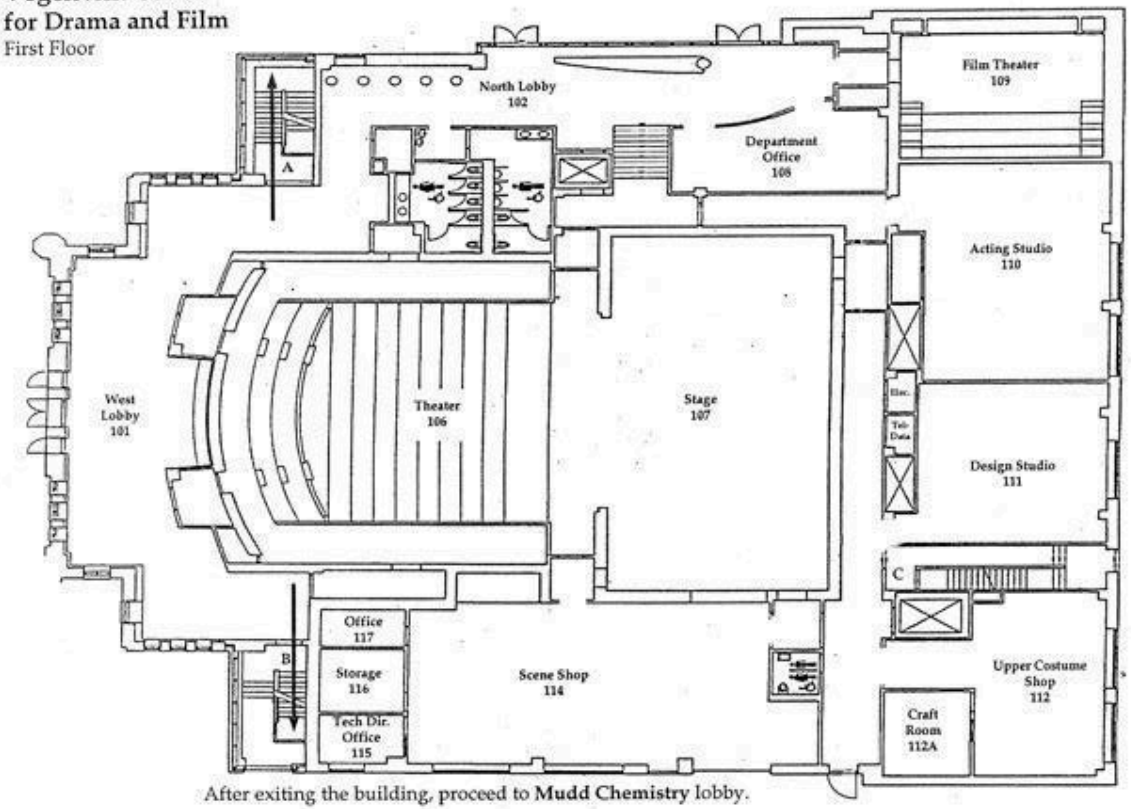
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: BUILDING LAYOUT



Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film

First Floor

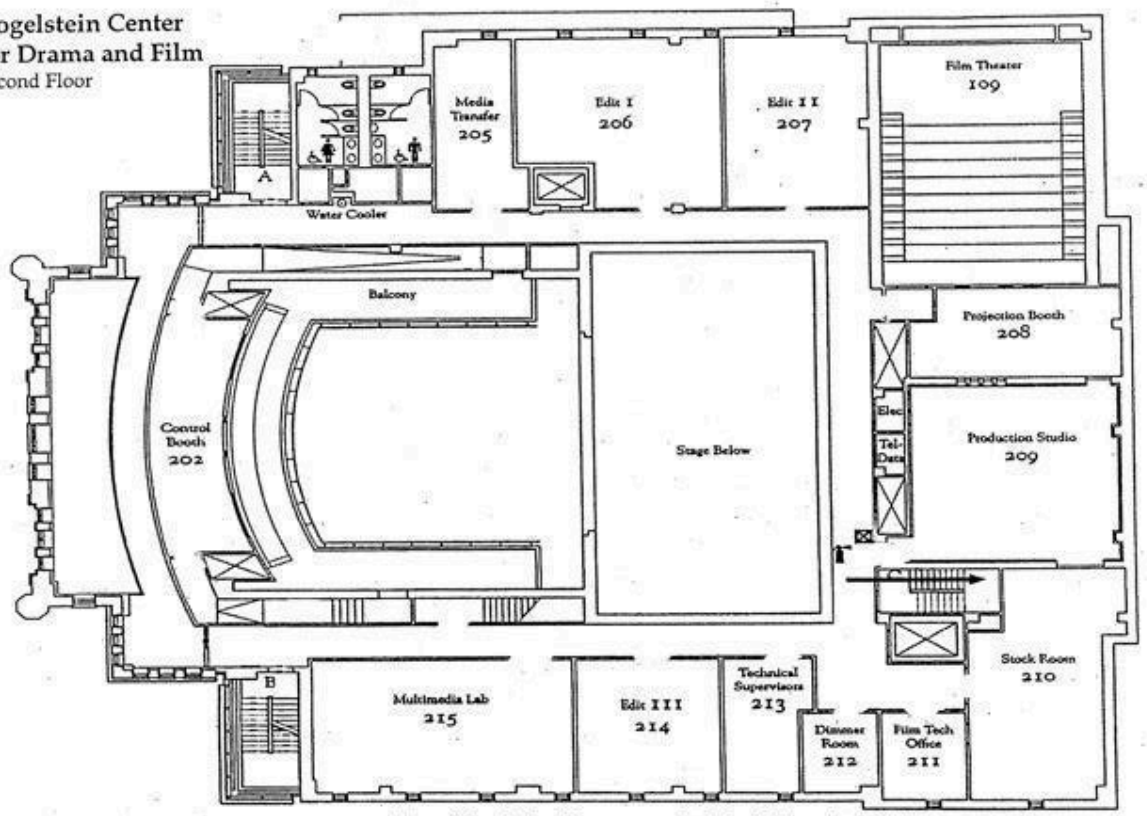


After exiting the building, proceed to **Mudd Chemistry** lobby.

Revised 8/20/2008

Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film

Second Floor

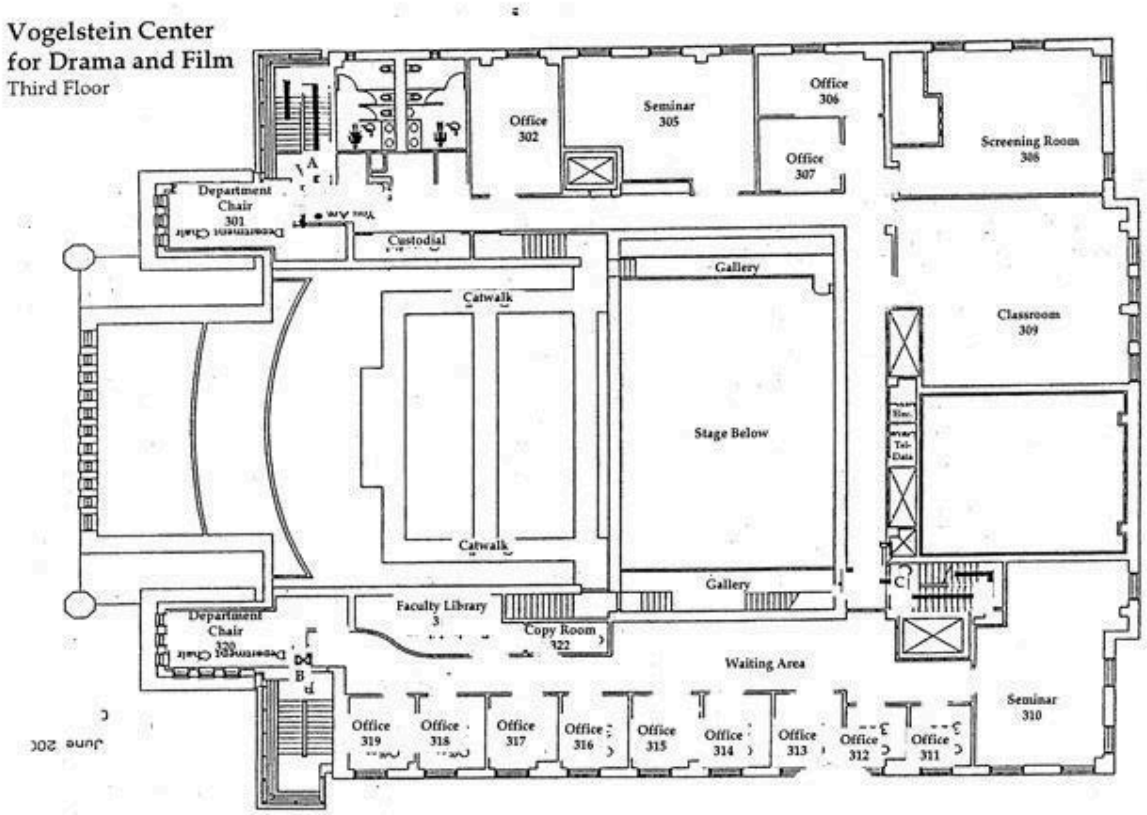


After exiting the building, proceed to **Mudd Chemistry** lobby.

Revised 8/20/2008

Vogelstein Center for Drama and Film

Third Floor



After exiting the building, proceed to **Ferry House** lobby.

Revised 8/20/2008

Appendix 2: Senior Thesis Tracks

Senior Thesis Tracks (Current 4.11.25)
The drama department does not require a track for graduation. However, in their junior year, students may apply to complete a thesis in production during their senior year. Consideration for a thesis in production is contingent upon the successful completion of the following prerequisite tracks:

Acting: The Actor's Craft (Drama 203); Art of Acting (Comedy or Classics, Drama 304 or 306); Drama Department Production in an Acting Role (Drama 200); One additional acting elective at the 200 or 300 level.

Costume Design: Introduction to Costume Design (Drama 209); Draping and Pattern Development (Drama 208); Advanced Costume Design (Drama 312); Drama Department Production as Costume Design Assistant (Drama 200).

Scenic Design: Scenic Design (Drama 323); Scenic Painting or Prop Making (Drama 285 or Drama 226); Drama Department Production as Scenic Design Assistant (Drama 200).

Lighting Design: Theater Lighting Design (Drama 282); One Additional Design Elective at the 200-level; Drama Department Production as Lighting Design Assistant (Drama 200).

Sound Design: Theater Sound Design (Drama 283); One Additional Design Elective at the 200-level; Drama Department Production as Sound Design Assistant (Drama 200).

Stage Management: Stage Management in Production (Drama 213); Drama Department Production as Assistant Stage Manager (Drama 200); Drama Department Production as Stage Manager (Drama 200); One additional production elective at the 200 or 300 level.

Directing: Stage Management in Production (Drama 213); Drama Department Production as Assistant Stage Manager or Stage Manager (Drama 200); Drama Department Production as Assistant Director (Drama 200); Director's Art (Drama 305).

Playwriting: Introduction to Playwriting (Drama 210); Advanced Playwriting (Drama 310). **Note** For Steerman consideration, playwrights must also

complete one semester of Drama Department Production in any department (Drama 200) and one additional production elective at the 200 or 300 level.

Dramaturgy: Introduction to Playwriting (Drama 210); Dramaturgy (Drama 232); Drama Department Production in any department (Drama 200); One additional production elective at the 200 or 300 level.