Theatre Studies

Year 2 Program Review

The Theatre Studies year 2 program review will detail our 5 year strategic plan. Also included is the information requested by the CEPC in the response to our year 1 review.

Mission Statement:

Saint Norbert College Theatre Studies embraces a liberal arts education challenging students intellectually, spiritually, and personally. We educate our students in critical and creative thinking skills as well as the practices of the Theatrical Arts. Through performance, we investigate the interplay between theory and practice, student and community culminating in challenging, provocative, and rewarding productions. Saint Norbert College Theatre Studies seeks to create opportunities for all participants and foster a spirit of communion and collaboration while striving for excellence.

Core Values:

1. To create challenging, engaging, and provocative theatrical experiences for SNC and the surrounding community.
2. To offer an interdependent learning environment that focuses on synthesizing diverse ideas and concepts into a cohesive whole.
3. To create life-long participants of theatrical art.
4. To demonstrate to the students that to be a theatre practitioner leads to greater self-awareness, greater artistic proficiency, and knowledge of how theatre informs the community.

Vision Statement:

As our department has grown since its inception in 2007, we have been able to craft a program which serves the immediate needs of the departmental productions and educates our students in the fundamentals of theatrical theory and practice. We will continue to foster a culture that trains our students to be theatrical practitioners beyond their SNC experience. We want our student to understand theatrical art, history, and scholarship as well as to gain the tools to create theatre in their future communities.

Theatre Studies Goals:

The Theatre Studies discipline is a small but vibrant program. We are committed to teaching and creating vibrant, challenging, and fulfilling theatre for our students and community. Our three main goals (hiring a full-time tenure track professor, hiring a full time craftsperson, and more storage space) are honestly beyond our control. We have a plan in
place if they do occur; but in the meantime, we have developed some objectives that are within our current resources.

1. Increase the student’s knowledge and experience of producing, art management, dramaturgy, playwriting, and practical theatre.
   - Using our existing courses (THEA 250, THEA 301, THEA 337, special topic classes,) enrichment workshops, and guest artists we will expose our students to an expanded view of theatre making. These areas are part of our learning outcomes and the senior capstone experience.
   - Timetable: Ongoing
   - Resources: If necessary, we will petition extra funds from the Dean’s office to recompense guest artists if/when they come to speak to our students.
   - Attainment steps:
     - Reevaluate classes to include or improve sections on these areas.
     - Obtain at least one guest artist a semester to present to the students. This can either be in person or Skype.
     - Assign students to these areas as their crew assignment for THEA 250.
     - Continue to offer the Theatre Workshop each semester and arrange performances of the student written work.
   - Person responsible: Stephen Rupsch and April Beiswenger

2. Development of an interdisciplinary arts major/minor.
   - Quite a few of the students in the Fine and Performing Arts are majoring in one area/minoring in another or majoring in an area and taking classes in the other two. With the advent of the new Fourth Division, it is a good time to create a major that recognizes the intertwining and interdisciplinary aspect of the arts and serves those students who are participating in all three.
   - Timetable: Introduction of the major for the 2015/16 school year.
   - Attainment steps:
     - Conduct a peer/aspirant study to see if any programs like this are extant.
     - Present rationale and rough proposal to Music and Art disciplines and the Associate Dean.
     - Develop a curriculum that includes courses from all three disciplines and a senior capstone.
     - Creation of an assessment plan.
     - Presentation to appropriate committee for vetting.
   - Person responsible: April Beiswenger

3. Continue the development of an assessment plan.
   - Now that we understand the type of information we need to gather and process, we will continue to revise our senior capstone as our most direct method of assessment.
   - Timetable: Ongoing – we need to take what we’ve learned from the changes to the 2013/14 Senior Capstone and apply them to next year’s to discover if they work. We also need to establish methods to gather information from our indirect methods.
Attainment steps:
- Meet after this semester’s capstone project to assess how successful the changes have been.
- Meet with OIE to go over the data and get advice on how to interpret it. We also want to use the OIE resources to gather the indirect data from student surveys, etc.
- Publish our assessment plan with OIE.
- Person responsible: April Beiswenger

4. Bring an outside assessor in year 5
- We brought in an outside assessor three years ago and it was fantastically useful in taking a look at what our discipline has to offer and what we need to work on. With the changes happening to the program (Stephen’s sabbatical, the introduction of the fourth division, the addition of the underground production, the workshop, the revised capstone) we need to have someone survey the program and see if we are missing any pieces.

Answers to the CEPC Year 1 Response

Collection, analysis of program data, and assessment plan

April Beiswenger has met with OIE to discuss the ongoing assessment of the program. We have revamped our Senior Capstone to be a better indicator of our success as a program and we currently have two students taking the capstone. Attached in appendix A is our current Senior Capstone program/rubric which we will use to assess our students’ work. We will also continue working on the assessment plan over the summer and will meet with OIE again at the beginning of the fall semester so they can help us with the next steps.

Faculty workloads

All courses are listed with the registrar. It is not feasible to develop a workload policy akin to the Music discipline because the nature of our work is vastly different than theirs. Many of our faculty-student contact hours are within the auspices of the classroom/meeting/rehearsal time, but a good deal of time is spent one-on-one or small work groups that meet at the convenience of the student’s schedule. The workload is also not consistent throughout the semester – the demands of the production are greatest in the month before opening night.

Course rotation

We have a course rotation and it will be published on our discipline website, as well as in the Theatre Studies Handbook that every major and minor will receive.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand the entirety of the theatrical process – the “page to stage.”
1. Experience the common steps universal to the theatrical process: deep reading, analyzing a script, research, development of the artistic vision, construction and rehearsal, performance, and critique.

2. Students will know of the historical context of theatre.

3. Students will develop their unique artistic *mise en scène*.
   a. Demonstrate sophisticated interpretations of text in all its forms.
   b. Ability to use metaphorical concepts – visual, textual, and personal.
   c. Understanding of ways that theatrical art is unique and effective.

4. Students strengthen and expand their collaborative abilities.
   a. Understand that collaboration and cooperation is integral to the theatrical process.
   b. Creative problem solving as a group.
   c. Ability to create new ideas within a specific context and with a specific cohort.

   a. Understanding of non-academic theatre.
   b. Career preparedness

Grading philosophy

Most of our grades come from the THEA 250 course – the production lab. We consistently have 20-30 students taking it every semester. In this course, the student has to complete certain tasks to get an A: they must complete their production assignment (acting, stage management, stage crew); they must attend all class meetings and required rehearsals; and they need to complete a certain number of work hours. We do not necessarily grade on quality – this is a difficult and delicate area. How can we tell a student that they get a C because they do not act, paint, or run the light board “well”? This class is specifically set up towards the student earning an A and if they have the dedication towards the project and complete all the required tasks, they earn the A.

For our other classes, we have instituted specific rubrics for most of the project assignments. These rubrics have changed how we grade projects and we are waiting to see how this affects the outcomes of the class.
Appendix A (This is the document that all of our seniors receive.

**THEA 450 – Senior Capstone**

Welcome to your senior capstone, the culmination of everything you’ve learned in the past four (or so) years as a Theatre Studies major. This document will:

- Give the rationale for the capstone.
- Give some of the learning objectives
- Give you some project options.
- Detail a rough project timeline.
- Grading rubric.

**Rationale:**

The capstone is meant as an opportunity for you to develop a theatrical experience of your own. It is the outgrowth of all of the classes, productions, workshops, collaborations, internships, and experiences you’ve had in your time with us. You get to be in charge of your own experience, with certain guidelines from us, of course. We’ve developed a couple of different options for the capstone, detailed below, but these are to be tailored to your unique experience. You may work with other seniors on a joint project, but you will be evaluated for most elements separately.

**Learning Objectives:**

These will be tailored to the individual project.

- The student will demonstrate a proficiency in the theatrical process:
  - Project selection
  - Script analysis
  - Research
  - Development of the artistic vision
  - Rehearsal and performance best practices
- The student will work collaboratively.
- The student will create a final piece that is of high standard.
- In cooperation with the faculty, the student will schedule and accomplish the elemental benchmarks of the course.

**Project options:**

These are some of the options you may pursue for your capstone. Your project must be approved by Stephen and April.

1. Select an existing playscript and produce it. You must have an integral role in the production as either the director or actor. The play must be approved by the faculty.
2. Design an element of a mainstage production. This must be arranged with April by the end of your 1st semester Junior year.
3. Write a theatrical piece and either act, direct, or produce it.
4. Write a substantive research paper.

**Project timeline**

This will be developed as we negotiate the project, but there are some major dates to be aware of:

- Project finalization by the end of the prior semester (end of fall for spring productions, end of spring for fall production.)
- Production team must be assembled by the beginning of the capstone semester.
- Production will be one of the last two weeks of the semester. If there are more than three separate capstone projects, the faculty will arrange a specific schedule.

Project specific dates will be part of the project development and will be made with the faculty and theatre facilities as needed.

**Grading rubric**

You will be graded on a series of benchmarks that will be developed as part of the project negotiations. Some of the requirements for production work are:

- Project Journal
- Dramaturgical Research Presentation – this will be presented to the THEA 250.
- Script Analysis
- Rubric Creation
- Professional Initiative

The project itself - 500 points. The pair of you are giving us the grading rubric for this section. You'll need to come up with 5 gradable areas for your production - otherwise known as: how do you want us to assess your production.