**SENIOR THESIS APPLICATION**

**The Barnard College Major in Theatre/Columbia College Major in Drama and Theatre Arts offers several thesis options: a performance thesis in the field of acting, directing, design, stage and production management, playwriting, dramaturgy, or a research thesis in any area of theatre or performance studies.** Given the fact that theses involve the commitment of considerable resources, and may require the student to do additional coursework in order to be ready for a successful experience, we both request proposals in January of the junior year, and encourage students to plan ahead!

All Thesis requests are due by the January deadline; students are required to list *three* alternatives in ranked order of preference. Please be aware that the Thesis committee will carefully consider your application, and will also be looking to see that coursework and crew assignments relative to your proposal have been fulfilled.

**For a fuller description of the thesis, please see "**[**The Senior Thesis**](https://theatre.barnard.edu/senior-thesis-0)**" on the Major/Department Information page of the Barnard Theatre Department website.** The "Thesis guidelines" for each thesis describe in detail the research, documentation, writing, and "casebook" part of performance theses, as well as the procedure for dramaturgy and research theses.

**SENIOR THESIS OPTIONS:**

**I. SENIOR THESIS: PERFORMANCE (THTR UN3997: FIELD)**

Students approved to pursue a thesis in a given area may be required to take specific coursework in the semester(s) preceding the thesis production (for example, Advanced Directing), and/or to attend formal courses (Solo Performance, Playwriting Lab, etc.) in conjunction with their registration for the Thesis. Crew assignments must be completed the semester prior to the thesis semester. **Note that each thesis field requires 2 additional courses in that field prior to graduation, and usually 1 course prior to the application.**

1. **ACTING** in a faculty-directed or guest-directed production (Fall and Spring semesters).  **Students approved for an acting thesis have typically been cast a significant role in a departmental production, and have taken at least one upper-level acting class prior to making the proposal, and all three prior to graduation. Students approved for an acting thesis will be auditioned later in the spring semester of the junior year and will be cast at that time in a production scheduled for their senior year. In lieu of a live audition, students may be invited to submit an audition video. All students undertaking an acting thesis register for THTR UN3997: ACTING in the semester of thesis.**

2. **ACTING** in a **DEVISED SOLO** piece to be created in the spring semester of the senior year and performed in the Thesis Festival in May. **Students will take the Solo Performance coursein the fall semester of the senior year unless they have taken it previously; if so, they may audit the fall semester course as part of the process of developing their work. They will typically have taken at least one upper-division acting class prior to making the proposal, and all three prior to graduation. They will then take THTR UN3997: SOLO PERFORMANCE in the spring semester.**

3. **DESIGNING** in a departmental production, either faculty directed or in the Senior Thesis Festival; students may propose to undertake Scenic, Costume, Sound, and/or Lighting Design. **Students approved for a design thesis have typically worked as assistant designer on a departmental show, and have taken at least one design class prior to making the proposal, and three prior to graduation. All students undertaking a design thesis register for THTR UN3997: DESIGN in the semester of the thesis.**

4.**STAGE AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT** fora departmental production, either faculty directed or in the Senior Thesis Festival. **Students approved for a stage and production management thesis have typically staged managed a Senior Thesis in Directing, and have taken the Stage Management course prior to making the proposal, and a design class (typically Lighting Design) a second design class or the Technical Theatre class prior to graduation. All students undertaking a stage and production management thesis register for THTR UN3997: STAGE AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT in the semester of the thesis.**

5. **DIRECTING** a play in the Senior Thesis Festival, in May of the senior year.

**Students approved for a directing thesis have typically worked as assistant director or stage manager on a departmental show, and have taken at least one directing class prior to the proposal; they will take Dramaturgy before completing the thesis, if not already taken at the time of the proposal. Directing thesis students complete three directing classes prior to graduation; they take Advanced Directing in the fall semester of senior year, and register for THTR UN3997: DIRECTING in the spring semester of the senior year.**

6. **DRAMATURGING** a production in the departmental season, in collaboration with a Senior Thesis in Directing project. A dramaturgy thesis proposal should identify required coursework and experience in the field and **should be proposed in conjunction with a senior thesis in directing Students approved for a dramaturgy thesis should have taken the Dramaturgy course prior to proposing, and be in the process of completing the additional coursework in theatre and performance studies. Students approved for a dramaturgy thesis must complete the additional two courses in theatre and performance studies (total of 4; 1 may be playwriting) by graduation, and will register for THTR UN3997: DRAMATURGY in the semester of the thesis.**

7. **WRITING** a play or performance script that will be given a staged reading in the Thesis Festival, May of the senior year. **Students should have taken at least one playwriting class by the time of application, and two (if they do not use playwriting as one of the acting/directing/design/playwriting requirements) or three (if they do so use playwriting) by graduation. Students approved for a playwriting thesis must submit the script to the playwriting thesis adviser in the Theatre department during the Fall term of the thesis year in order to remain eligible for the Spring semester staged reading; students register for THTR UN3997: PLAYWRITING in the spring semester of the senior year.**

**Full details on the research and writing required to accompany the performance as part of the thesis process are available under the "Thesis guidelines" of the appropriate field on the website.** Theses are seen, read, and graded by the adviser and one additional member of the BC Department of Theatre/CU Interdepartmental Committee on Drama and Theatre Arts, as appointed by the Chair of the BC Theatre Department. On occasion a second reader may be sought from off campus, if there is a willing scholar with significant research expertise in the field, or a faculty member from another department (particularly in the case of joint theses shared between two departments).

**II. SENIOR THESIS: RESEARCH (THTR UN3998)**

A research thesis proposal should identify, in a preliminary way, not only the general field of the project, but a specific line of inquiry; it need not be extensive, but should give some idea of the kinds of questions to be asked, and what material will be examined as a means of following those questions out. The thesis is typically in the range of 25-30 pages, and undertakes an original, critical study of a problem in the history, theory, or practice of drama, theatre, and performance. Students proposing a written thesis will preferably meet with the potential adviser prior to the proposal (the name of adviser or potential adviser should be noted on the proposal). Advisers may be selected from appropriate faculty in the BC Department of Theatre, or from the CU Interdepartmental Committee in Drama and Theatre Arts, with the approval of the chair of the Department of Theatre. The thesis is a one-semester project (though preparation, as with performance theses, frequently extends into the previous term), and is preferably taken in the spring semester of the senior year, but may be taken in the fall semester with prior approval. Students undertaking a Research thesis must have two additional research-oriented courses toward the degree prior to graduation; these courses are typically taken in the Department of Theatre, but may, with advisor's approval, be taken in literature departments at Barnard or Columbia. If these courses have not been completed at the time of the proposal, they should also be discussed with the student's thesis adviser.

Research theses are read and graded by the adviser and one additional member of the BC Department of Theatre/CU Interdepartmental Committee on Drama and Theatre Arts.

**TIMETABLE**

**Spring junior year**

**January**: Thesis proposals from all students due. Students who have yet to serve as assistant director, stage manager, or assistant designer ask to be considered for these positions in the spring semester.

**February**: Thesis committee approves thesis candidates for the following year. Design, stage/production management, and dramaturgy students assigned to specific shows in the coming season; students in these fields should expect some preparatory work over the summer if assigned to the first fall show. Acting students audition/submit video in March/April and are cast in roles for the following year; they should expect preparatory work over the summer if cast in either fall production. Solo performance, playwriting, and research students meet with adviser about timetable of thesis in following year.

**Fall senior year:**

Approved directing candidates take Advanced Directing; playwriting candidates take additional playwriting classes and meet with playwriting adviser. Solo performance candidates take Solo Performance course (if needed) and/or consult with the adviser. Design, management, and acting theses assigned to fall productions move into production, registered for THTR UN3997 with appropriate adviser. Those assigned to the spring should consult with the relevant adviser.

Research candidates electing to write thesis in fall semester work with faculty mentor on research and writing the thesis; research candidates electing to write thesis in spring make contact with faculty mentor with regard to timetable.

**November**: Playwriting candidates submit draft of play to playwriting adviser.

**Fall semester performance theses: Casebook materials due to Department and adviser by noon the Friday following performance, without exception. Fall semester research theses: Due to Department and adviser by noon on the Monday prior to the last class day, without exception.**

**Spring senior year**:

Approved directing candidates move into production, registered for THTR UN3997 with Directing adviser; approved playwriting candidates revise final draft and move into production of staged reading, registered for THTR UN3997 with Playwriting adviser; solo performance candidates finalize performance text and move into production, registered for THTR UN3997 with Solo Performance adviser; design, stage and production management, dramaturgy, and acting theses assigned to spring productions move into production, registered for THTR UN3997 with appropriate adviser.

Research candidates electing to write thesis in spring semester work with faculty mentor on research and writing the thesis, registered for THTR UN3998.

**Spring semester performance theses in acting, directing, dramaturgy, design: Casebook materials due to Department, adviser, and second reader by noon the Friday following performance, without exception. Spring semester performance theses in solo performance and playwriting: Casebook materials due to Department, adviser, and second reader by Monday following performance, without exception. Spring semester research theses: Due to adviser and second reader by noon on the Monday prior to the last class day, without exception.**

**SENIOR THESIS APPLICATION:**

**PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE *ONLY* (delete the previous section) TO THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT (**[**theatre@barnard.edu**](mailto:theatre@barnard.edu)**) AS AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT WITH THE SUBJECT HEADING: “SENIOR THESIS PROPOSAL” BY NOON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025**

**Name:**

**E-mail address:**

**Barnard, Columbia, or General Studies:**

**Majors other than Theatre:**

**Cell #:**

1. Please list THREE choices and rank in order of preference (for example, directing, acting, dramaturgy; or research, directing, design). For each choice, write a brief plan or rationale, c. 250 words each. **APPLICATIONS are considered on the basis of several criteria, including previous qualifying coursework and the substance and clarity of the proposal.**

**This is the information needed for each proposal: you can replace the**

**description below with your three proposals.**

-**Acting**: discuss strengths as an actor and areas you wish to develop in the thesis.

-**Design**: discuss field of proposed thesis and work you've done in that area.

-**Directing**: discuss **two** works of 50 minutes or less you propose to direct; if possible, propose in conjunction with potential candidate in Dramaturgy.

-**Dramaturgy**: discuss previous preparation and goals for thesis work; if possible, propose in conjunction with potential candidate in Directing.

-**Playwriting**: is there a draft of your play extant? If so discuss it, or new direction you plan to take on the thesis.

-**Devised Solo Performance**: discuss a project of 15-20 minutes you propose to research, develop and perform. Should include subject or theme of project and research material sources.

-**Stage and Production Management**: discuss previous preparation, work as stage manager, and goals for your thesis.

-**Research**: discuss subject of thesis and/or paper to be developed, significance of the project; identify the potential adviser with whom you have already spoken about undertaking a thesis from the Theatre Department research faculty.

2. List courses taken in the Theatre major (course, year, instructor, title).

3. List remaining requirements to complete the major.

4. List crew assignments completed. When will requirements be completed? (If you are not sure whether you have completed your crew assignment, please contact the Director of Production, Mike Banta at [mbanta@barnard.edu](mailto:mbanta@barnard.edu).)

5. List Theatre department productions in which you have participated, and your role in the production (i.e., actor, crew, design, dramaturg, etc.).