Student Handbook

THEATRE

**Academic Standards**

Grading will vary depending on individual instructors and course levels. Below is listed the general guidelines for a freshman level course. You are responsible for being aware of the specific grading scale for each of your classes/instructors, which will be present in the course syllabi.

We want you to succeed, so it’s vital you keep up with your studies. **In order to register for 300 and 400 level classes (Junior/Senior level) Theatre majors must receive a “C” or better in the prerequisite course that precedes it. For example:**

* **BFA Acting students must earn at least a C in THEA 340 - Acting II to be able to register for THEA 341 – Acting III.**
* **BA/Design Tech students must earn at least a C in THEA 432 – Design I to be able to register for THEA 442 – Design II**

These courses will be by permission of instructor.

Often, the time required for participating in productions becomes extremely demanding whether you are performing, designing, or working crew. It is imperative that you exercise mature judgment in balancing these demands with the requirements and assignments in other course work. If this should become a problem, see your advisor or Program Director immediately. Also, stay informed of University opportunities for workshops on time management and stress.

It is vital for theatre artists to establish professional work habits, especially punctuality. Therefore, it is expected that Theatre students will attend each and every class and be consistently on time. Absences and arriving late will affect your grade and can result in your failing a course.

**It is strictly against School policy to use production work as an excuse for poor performance in classes. The School will conduct periodic surveys of all Theatre faculty in this regard. Again, if you foresee a problem, contact your advisor and/or the Program Director.**

**The grading policy below is the Theatre Program default. Individual instructors may establish their own grading policy in their syllabi which will supersede this.**

**Grading and attendance guidelines for freshman level courses**:

**Grading**

1. Final grades are based on the 100-point grading system:

A+ = 97-100, A = 93-96, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ =77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, F = 0-59

1. Incomplete: Instructor may grant a student an “I” grade for work not completed if there is a reasonable prospect that the student can pass the course by making up the work missed if the incompletion is unavoidable and not caused by the student’s negligence. The work must be made up and a grade received by the registrar by the last day of classes of the next regular semester, or the grade will automatically become an F. See WCU Academic Regulations for further information: <http://www.wcu.edu/4595.asp>
2. Final Grade Changes
   * 1. When a grade other than Incomplete is reported officially by an instructor at the end of the term, the grade is recorded and can be changed only if an error was made in estimating or reporting it
     2. Within 35 calendar days after you receive the grade you should submit a formal written appeal to the instructor. This appeal must include
        1. A statement of the reason(s) why the student believes the grade was impermissibly or arbitrarily assigned, and
        2. The resolution sought
     3. The instructor must respond to your request in writing as soon as possible (no later than ten working days after receiving the written appeal).
     4. If your instructor denies your appeal, you may then appeal to the Director of the School of Stage & Screen , then the Associate Dean, The College Academic Action Committee, The Dean, and finally the Provost.
     5. The entire section on Academic Appeals Policy can be found on-line at:  
        <http://catalog.wcu.edu/>. Follow link to Academic Regulations

**Attendance**

In accordance with the WCU Undergraduate Academic Catalog (<http://catalog.wcu.edu>), the Faculty of the Theatre Program subscribes to a policy requiring students to attend class regularly. It is vital for theatre artists to establish professional work habits, especially punctuality.

Therefore, it is expected that Theatre students will attend each and every class and be consistently on time. Illness, religious holidays, or participation in athletic or other University sponsored activities are usually acceptable reasons for absences, but notification and arrangements should be made with the instructor by the student prior to the event, if at all possible.

**The attendance policies set forth below are the Theatre Program default. Individual instructors may establish their own attendance policy in their course syllabi which will supersede these:**

1. You are expected to attend every class, If you cannot be there due to illness or other personal needs (such as doctor’s appointments, University or School sanctioned activities, etc), you must notify your instructor by phone or email before class time. The instructor will determine if this is an excused absence. Any other failure to attend class or inform instructor ahead of time is an unexcused absence.
2. If your class meets three times a week, *anyone missing more than 5 classes*, excused or unexcused, for whatever reason *may receive a failing grade*.
3. If your class meets twice a week, *anyone missing 5 classes*, excused or unexcused, for whatever reason *may receive a failing grade.*
4. If your class meets once a week, *anyone missing 3 classes*, excused or unexcused, for whatever reason *may receive a failing grade.*
5. Please do not be late. It is inconsiderate of your classmates and the instructor. Two lates count as one unexcused absence.
6. *If a student does not receive a prior approval for an absence from the instructor, they may request a “Notification of Absence” through the University by contacting the Division of Student Affairs located in Scott East. If approved an email will be sent to each of the student’s instructors notifying them of the pending or past absence. Whether or not the absence is excused for a particular class is the decision of the instructor.*

***Drop for Non-Attendance***

***In accordance with the Academic Catalog Attendance Policy***

1. ***An instructor will have the discretion to cancel a student’s registration for a course if the previously-registered student fails to attend the first class meeting and fails to notify the instructor prior to the end of the first day of class.***
2. ***Students may re-register for the course on a seats-available basis up through the end of drop/add (5th day of the semester).***

**Plagiarism and Cheating**

Western Carolina University, as a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at Western Carolina University because it threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those whodepend on knowledge and integrity. Academic dishonesty includes:

1. **Cheating** – Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
2. **Fabrication** – Intentional falsification of information or citation in an academic exercise.
3. **Plagiarism** – Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in an academic exercise.
4. **Facilitation of Academic Dishonesty** – Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help someone else to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as knowingly allowing another to copy information during an examination or other academic exercise.

Instructors have the right to determine the appropriate sanction or sanctions for academic dishonesty within their courses up to and including a final grade of “F” in the course. Within 5 calendar days of the event the instructor will inform Program Director and the Director of the School of Stage & Screen in writing of the academic dishonesty charge and sanction.

Refer to <http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=143#honestypolicy>. Follow link to Academic Dishonesty Policy.

**Probation**

1. If your overall GPA is below 2.5, you will be placed on probation. Such students will receive notification of probation in writing, a copy of which will be place in your advising folder. If at the end of that period the issue is resolved, student will return to good standing. If the issue is has not been resolved, the student will face dismissal from the program. Student may request in writing an additional semester to resolve the issue. Faculty will determine if that request is granted, based on the criteria listed below.
   1. Likelihood of achieving a 2.5 in one semester.
   2. Student’s demonstrated effort in current classes.
   3. Student’s overall performance in the program.
2. Probation may be imposed for other infractions not deemed of the level for dismissal (see Student Code of Conduct).
3. Students offered probation must sign a probation agreement which will go in their record.
4. Students on probationary status may be prohibited from participating in productions or from student-assistant positions in the School of Stage & Screen until probation status has been resolved.
5. Students should understand that artistic merit is an important attribute of any professional. Therefore, a student’s artistic promise may be taken into consideration in any decision regarding probation and dismissal.

**Dismissal**

1. A history of academic probation (two semesters or more) is grounds for dismissal. Such students may request an opportunity to prove their academic commitment to the program.
2. Infractions of the Student Code of Conduct, in addition to any penalties imposed by the University, could lead to dismissal from the Theatre program.
3. Any other disciplinary actions during the academic year may be grounds for dismissal.

**Appeal process**

1. Students will be informed in writing of dismissal within one week of their interview. Reasons justifying the appeal must be stated in this document. The faculty will then advise the student and help facilitate enrollment in another major.
2. Students may submit a written statement to Program Director and Director of the School of Stage & Screen stating reasons why they should remain in the program. Once an appeal has been submitted:
   1. The faculty must meet to consider the appeal
   2. If appeal is accepted, the student may still be put on probation.
   3. If the appeal is denied, the student may appeal to the Department Head.
   4. The Director of School of Stage & Screen may ask the faculty to reconsider the appeal. Faculty shall then meet with the Director of School of Stage & Screen to discuss the appeal. Faculty will then vote on appeal, and the faculty’s decision shall be final and binding.