

**Department of Theatre and Dance**  
**Ph.D. in Theatre with a Specialization in Performance as Public Practice**  
**Curriculum Guide**

**Revised Fall 2021**

**Ph.D. in Theatre with a specialization in Performance as Public Practice  
Curriculum Guide  
Revised Summer 2021**

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**Field of Study**

The Ph.D. degree in Theatre (Performance as Public Practice) is an advanced, terminal degree that is typically completed in five years (or 10 semesters). The degree qualifies you to teach at the university level or to work in a variety of other academic, organizational, artistic and professional settings. The Ph.D. requires 84 credit hours and the completion of a written dissertation.

The University of Texas at Austin's Ph.D. in Theatre (Performance as Public Practice) permits considerable latitude. The Program focuses on the historical development, cultural and theoretical contexts and artistic significance of theatre and dance disciplines and institutions, as well the interrelationships of theatre arts and the role of performance in public spheres. The Program is highly influenced by interdisciplinary work in performance studies, defining performance in varied and wide cultural contexts. Students are expected to give primary attention to an area of expertise of their choice, while training in the broader theoretical, critical and historical contexts of the field.

Our faculty defines "public practice" as activities that include:

- Creating and/or producing performance
- Working as an academic (a professor who melds theory and practice in their teaching, scholarship, production and service)
- Producing and distributing research and scholarship
- Writing performance criticism
- Working as a dramaturg and outreach director
- Arts administration
- Working in public programming with foundations and non-profits
- Establishing public policy
- Writing grants
- Using applied theatre methods and theories
- Teaching in universities, colleges, high schools and community centers
- Using performance as a tool for understanding communities and difference
- Theorizing performance as a site of civic engagement and often dissent
- Redefining and recontextualizing the role of performance in culture
- Promoting arts-based civic dialogue
- Case-making and agenda-setting for public culture

Graduates will contribute to the public practice of performance through:

- Writing
- Publishing
- Creating performance
- Teaching
- Public speaking
- Arts programming and curation
- Arts-based public policy making
- Arts-based community development, aka "Creative Placemaking"
- Consulting

The Program offers students a broad spectrum of approaches, methods and disciplines. It prepares graduates to:

- Make clear and cogent arguments
- Manage and complete complex projects
- Integrate performance history, theory and practice
- Address a range of audiences from scholarly to popular
- Research performance histories, theories, practices, criticism and literature
- Forge theoretical and methodological connections between performance, dance and/or theatre studies and other disciplines such as media, television and film studies, race and ethnic studies, cultural studies, popular culture, literary studies, gender and queer studies, etc.
- Analyze written texts and live performance

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- Work as a production dramaturg and outreach director, collaborating with playwrights, directors, production teams and audiences
- Interpret and develop performance as a public practice in variety of contexts, including commercial theatre, activist theatre, theatre of the oppressed, physical theatre or dance
- Teach courses ranging from large introductory lectures to specialized courses at the community college level and in community settings
- Create and implement outreach strategies that expand the meanings of performance to various audiences
- Develop research and teaching specialties within the field, such as:
  - Adaptation studies
  - Applied and community-based theatre
  - Arts criticism and writing
  - Black performance
  - Contemporary performance
  - Cultural policy
  - Dance studies
  - Feminist theories and performance
  - Historiography
  - Latinx performance
  - Musical theatre
  - Performance ethnography
  - Performance of the Americas
  - Queer theatre and performance
  - Theories of pedagogy

### **Organization of Graduate Studies in the Department of Theatre and Dance**

The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), consisting of the tenure-track and tenured faculty in the department, establishes the policies and requirements for all graduate programs offered by the department. They have delegated to the Graduate Studies Executive Committee (XCOM) the administration of those policies.

Graduate students in PPP will primarily communicate with PPP faculty and their academic (and later the dissertation) advisor when they need guidance. Students will also work with the Department Graduate Advisor, who signs off on student paperwork, and the Graduate Coordinator, who can answer questions about enrollment status and registration and can provide students with the Program of Study form (all faculty also have access to the POS; the form is also posted on Canvas).

### **Advising**

Upon admission, each student is assigned an academic advisor from among the faculty who teach in PPP. With this advisor, the student plans courses each semester, prepares the Program of Study that guides coursework and fulfills other requirements for the degree. The academic advisor helps the student decide how to meet the core courses, language requirement and practicum in Performance as Public Practice and electives that support

the major field of study. At the end of the student's second or third semester of coursework, the student should choose a dissertation supervisor from the PPP faculty. The supervisor can be the same faculty member as the academic advisor or a different faculty member; once the transition has been made, the student will consult primarily with the supervisor. Supervisors must be members of the Graduate Studies Committee and the PPP faculty.

### **Coursework**

OGS policy allows for six long semesters (exclusive of summer semesters) of doctoral study, including both course work and candidacy exams. Students who completed their M.A. at UT will be considered by OGS to be at the doctoral level once they have completed 39 hours. Students who complete their M.A. at UT and remain for a Ph.D. will have five years to complete their degree. Students who complete their M.F.A. at UT and remain for a Ph.D. will have four years to complete their degree. Students who are making satisfactory progress toward their degree as determined by their dissertation supervisor and the PPP faculty will be granted appropriate extensions should they be necessary.

### **Program of Study**

By the first week of November during their first semester in residence, students must submit for approval to the Head of the Ph.D. Program a Program of Study. The Program should be completed on the form provided by the Graduate Coordinator and discussed with the student's faculty advisor in some detail before it is submitted. The Ph.D. Program of Study generally includes 54 credits in addition to the minimum of 30 hours completed towards the Master's Degree:

1. Core 1: Required Courses (9-12 credits)
2. Core 2: Required Courses (15 credits)
3. Electives (9 credits, at least 6 of those outside the department)
4. Exam Course Hours (at least 3 credits)
5. Practicum (these do not count in the credit tally)
6. Languages (these do not count in the credit tally)
7. Dissertation Course Hours (at least 18 credits)

Doctoral students are not allowed to include undergraduate courses on their programs of study.

**Required Courses:** Core courses offer the student grounding in a range of critical theoretical, methodological, historical, analytical and performance practices.

#### Core 1: Required Courses (12 credits)

- Proseminar: Theories and Methods in Performance as Public Practice (TD 391)
- Supervised Teaching in Theatre and Dance (TD 398T)
- Historiography (TD 387D)
- Research Methods (TD 388)

(\*Required ONLY if student did not take comparable course in M.A. or M.F.A. All other courses are mandatory, and cannot be substituted for another course.)

Core 2: Required Courses (24 credits)

- Topics in Performance Analysis or Dramaturgy (TD 387D)
- Performance Ethnography (TD 387D) or Performance as Research (TD387D)
- Topics in Performance History (TD 387D)
- Topics in Arts & Cultural Policy (TD 387D)
- Devising (3 credits)  
May include: Kinetic Storytelling, Devising, Narrative in Physical Performance, Playwriting, Directing, Choreography, Solo Performance, etc.

Some of the courses above are offered on regular rotations:

<b>Fall, even-numbered years (eg "2018")</b>	<b>Fall, odd-numbered years (eg "2017")</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Historiography (TD 391)</li> <li>● Supervised Teaching in Theatre and Dance (TD398T)</li> <li>● Research Methods (TD 388)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topics in Arts &amp; Cultural Policy (TD 387D)</li> <li>● Supervised Teaching in Theatre and Dance (TD398T)</li> <li>● Research Methods (TD 388)</li> </ul>
<b>Spring odd-numbered years</b>	<b>Spring, even-numbered years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proseminar in Performance as Public Practice (TD 391)</li> <li>● Dramaturgy (TD 387D)</li> <li>● Topics in Performance Analysis (TD 387D)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Topics in Theatre History (TD 387D)</li> <li>● Performance as Research (TD 387D)</li> </ul>

*\* A number of courses, offered in the fall and spring of both even- and odd-numbered years, can fulfill the "Performance Analysis." To determine whether a course counts as an analysis or a devising credit, consult with your advisor.*

**Electives** (9 credits, at least 6 of those outside the department):

Some electives are offered regularly, while others only occasionally. They vary in content, methodology and approach. Some examples within the program include The Artist as Entrepreneur, Choreographing Gender/Dancing Desire, Feminist Theory and Performance, Narrative in Physical Performance, Reading the Canon, Staging Black Feminism, etc.

For courses outside the department, students should carefully consider the professor, content and methodology. Many PPP students find relevant courses in departments and programs such as African and African Diasporic Studies, American Studies, Art History, Asian American Studies, English, History, Mexican American and Latino/a Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, etc.

**Practicum** (Credits toward the Practicum requirement do not count toward the Ph.D. degree):

The practicum is specific to each student, and needs to be described in detail, after consultation with the student's faculty advisor. The practicum will be handled via contract. The project should bear some relation, where possible, to the student's research interests, and should be a substantial project with appropriate supervision. Additionally, the Program believes that practical experience in theatre and performance is an important part of a student's preparedness for the academic and professional job markets focused on arts practice and production. While no courses in theatrical production are required, the Program strongly encourages students to demonstrate their facility with some aspect of theatre practice, either by taking courses in production or by narrating prior curricular and future extracurricular experience.

**Languages** (Credits toward the language requirement do not count toward the Ph.D. degree):

The Program requires competency or fluency in one additional language, except when additional language competency is required to conduct dissertation research. Students should make their choices according to their research and career objectives and should consult their faculty advisor while making these decisions. The language requirement can be fulfilled in a number of ways. Possibilities for meeting this requirement include satisfactory completion of one or more advanced courses in which a substantial part of the course depends on knowledge of the language (or transcript evaluation in cases where a student has completed advanced courses in a foreign language elsewhere). Other means of completing the language requirement may be discussed with the student's advisor.

**Exam Course Hours** (TD 395, minimum 3 credits):

Students should plan to take at least one and up to two exam course hours to prepare for their first and second qualifying exams (students can only take one per semester). The schedule and process is discussed below.

**Dissertation Course Hours** (minimum 18 credits):

These credits are accumulated when the student has completed coursework and is writing the dissertation. The first year of candidacy you must be enrolled in 9 hours of dissertation course work, conventionally TD 999R the first semester and TD 999W the second semester.

### **Qualifying Examinations**

The University requires that each doctoral student pass qualifying examinations to be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. Qualifying exams cannot be taken until the student has completed the language requirements. The qualifying examination in Theatre and Dance is divided into two parts and is usually completed during the fifth semester of graduate study (typically the fall of the third year). In some cases, the student may opt to take the first part of the exam in their fourth semester. The first part must be completed satisfactorily before the second part can be taken. The student may opt to take one or two sections of Exam Study (TD 395) to prepare but may only take one per semester.

## Key Dates

Year	Semester	Task	Date
Spring, Year Two	Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create bibliography</li> <li>● Draft of exam questions</li> </ul>	During the semester By end of term
Summer, Year Two		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Revise exam questions</li> <li>● Continue to read for exam</li> <li>● Draft proposal</li> </ul>	
Fall, Year Three	Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Submit revised questions and draft of proposal to advisor</li> <li>● Submit draft of questions to Executive Committee</li> <li>● First Qualifying Exam</li> <li>● Submit revised Dissertation Proposal to Executive Committee</li> <li>● Oral Defense of Second Exam</li> </ul>	Week one  Week three  Week five Week twelve  Week fifteen

## First Qualifying Exam

This is a take-home exam; the PPP Program Head will email students their exam by 9 a.m. on the Friday of the exam weekend, and they must return their answers by 4 p.m. on the following Monday. The faculty expects the exam answers to be suitably referenced, fully synthesized, cogently structured and well written and to show evidence of the student's knowledge of the field and its literature.

To prepare for the first qualifying exam, students should enroll for Exam Study (395P) with their supervisor during the fourth semester (typically the spring of the second year) and compile a bibliography of materials from their coursework to date. The examination will demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize knowledge under the "performance as public practice" rubric. This bibliography will serve as the student's reading list for the examination. Working with their supervisor, the student will synthesize three topic areas based on their reading list. These topic areas will allow the student to draw connections among their bases of knowledge and to critically engage their own broadly defined "canon." The topic area lists should indicate a healthy balance of specialist and generalist knowledge in the field and a good spread of methodological inquiry (i.e., ethnography, critical analysis, dramaturgy, teaching, etc.).

Once three topic areas are clearly defined, students will write four questions of their own which, in the writing of their answers, will allow them to demonstrate how they synthesize knowledge in performance as public practice. The initial draft is due to the supervisor during the fourth semester (typically spring of the second year). The supervisor will review the student's questions and suggest revisions to be completed over the summer before the third year.



The student will then submit their revised draft of questions to their supervisor during week one of the fifth semester (fall of the third year). The student will then revise and submit the list of questions to the Examination Committee via the PPP Program Head in week three for feedback prior to the final submission of the questions. The Examination Committee will read the questions and of the four questions will select three. The student will choose two to respond to over the weekend exam, which will take place during week five.

Students will write two ten-page (exclusive of endnotes), double-spaced essays that answer the questions posed. The Examination Committee will read and evaluate the answers.

At certain times, other members of the Graduate Studies Committee may be asked to participate on the student's first qualifying examination as necessary and appropriate. An oral examination may be given after the first qualifying exam has been completed and evaluated. The oral exam can be waived if the student is judged to have done well on the written exam. The assessment of the student's performance will be sent in writing to the Graduate Advisor. In case of failure, the student may repeat this part of the qualifying examinations no more than once.

### Second Qualifying Exam

This part of the qualifying exam can be completed only after the first part has been judged satisfactory. The second qualifying exam presents the dissertation proposal for faculty review and approval. A draft of the proposal should be presented to the dissertation supervisor during the first week of the fall semester of the third year (the fifth semester of graduate study). A revised proposal will be submitted to the head of the PPP program in week twelve. We expect students to work through numerous drafts with their supervisor, to be responsive to feedback and attentive to deadlines. Students should enroll for Exam Study with the supervisor (TD 395) during this semester.

The dissertation proposal generally follows this format:

1. **Introduction:** This section introduces the project and gives the readers a sense of why the work is important. The author states the thesis of the dissertation, generally as a question or challenge to the field.
2. **Description of Project and its Significance:** This section narrows the focus of the project, giving the reader a sense of the parameters of the study. It also emphasizes why the work is important and how it makes an original contribution to research and scholarship.
3. **Review of Literature:** This section details the precedents of the project, explaining why and states how this dissertation will use them. The review of literature also projects how the final document will fit into the larger field. In this section, the

author focuses only on the works that contribute to the entire study, not just a chapter or small part of the whole.

4. **Methodology:** This section details how the author will conduct their study and what materials will be used. The methodology details what questions will be asked (to illustrate the thesis and arrive at a conclusion), how materials will be analyzed, how the parts fit together and what criteria facilitate inclusion in the study. In short, this section demonstrates the author's ability to undertake the project.
5. **Chapter Breakdown and Conclusion:** This section shows how work will be divided into chapters and what will comprise each one. The author describes each chapter fully and concludes the proposal.
6. **Bibliography:** The bibliography includes the primary and secondary texts that will be essential to the dissertation.

The dissertation proposal (5,000-6,000 words, double-spaced, not including bibliography) must be submitted to the PPP faculty Dissertation Proposal Committee for approval by the designated deadline each semester.

Once the PPP Dissertation Faculty Committee has read the written proposal, the student will prepare an oral defense in week fifteen of the fall semester of the third year, at which time faculty can provide feedback on the dissertation topic and structure. At the end of this oral, the Committee will approve or fail the dissertation proposal. The Committee may accept the proposal, request revisions or reject it. If the faculty judges the proposal to be unsatisfactory, after initial revisions, the student may be permitted a second chance to submit a satisfactory proposal. No more than two attempts are allowed.

The student may not be admitted to candidacy until the proposal is judged to be satisfactory. The assessment of the second qualifying exam will be sent in writing to the Graduate Advisor.

### **Public Presentation**

Prospective doctoral candidates will deliver a presentation of their proposed dissertations before the faculty and general student body during the PPP Friday@2 Symposium. Usually these presentations are scheduled during the fourth year. Presentations will last no more than 30 minutes and will offer prospective candidates a chance to present findings, raise questions, identify shared interests and cultivate generative research alliances within the program and in the University at-large.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

After fulfilling the language requirement and passing both Qualifying Exams, the student is nominated to the Graduate School for Admission to Candidacy. The student is formally admitted to candidacy when the Program of Study is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School and a dissertation committee is appointed. To be admitted to candidacy, the

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Program must list, and the Graduate Advisor must approve, courses the student has taken, dissertation hours to be taken, the proposed dissertation title, a brief outline of the project and a proposed dissertation committee.

Please note: to complete dissertations involving interviews with human subjects, students will need to file an application with the Human Subjects and Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process generally begins when the students file for candidacy and requires that the student submit a copy of the project (dissertation) proposal.

To learn more about the IRB, please visit the Office of Research Support:  
(<http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/>)

All completed coursework included in the Program of Study at the time of admission to candidacy must have been taken within the previous six years (exclusive of a maximum of three years of military service). Once admitted to candidacy, the student must register for nine credits of dissertation hours for at least two semesters (18 hours). The student must register each semester (exclusive of summer sessions) until the degree is completed.

If students have not completed the dissertation within three years from the date of admission to candidacy, the GSC and Performance as Public Practice faculty will review their progress. The GSC may recommend that the student meet new requirements that may have been adopted in the interim or may require the student to take additional courses. The committee might recommend that the student's candidacy be extended one or two semesters or that the student's candidacy be terminated. After three years have passed in candidacy without completing the degree, the candidate will be reviewed annually. Recommendations made by the GSC must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

**Dissertation**

Each student must select a dissertation supervisor and a minimum of three additional people to serve on their dissertation or treatise committee.

The supervisor and at least two other committee members must be members of your program's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). At least one committee member must be from outside your GSC. The dissertation supervisor should be selected with guidance from the student's faculty advisor; the Head of the Ph.D. Program must be informed of the student's choice of supervisor.

Students normally work with their supervisor until the dissertation research and writing has reached an advanced stage. Students should clarify with each member of their committee when they would like to engage in the process of reviewing the dissertation writing. A final oral examination date must be set that conforms to the Graduate School's deadlines. The dissertation committee needs to review the dissertation at least one month prior to the oral defense date. All members of the dissertation committee must sign their approval of the dissertation before the Graduate School can accept it.

**Final Oral Examination**

A satisfactory oral examination is required for the approval of the dissertation. A request to hold the final oral exam must be formally submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks in advance of the proposed exam date. The request signifies the acceptance of the dissertation for the purpose of giving the exam. The committee's decision to examine a dissertation must be unanimous.

The examination will cover the dissertation and its general field, and such other parts of the student's Program of Study as the committee determines. If all the examiners are satisfied that the student passed all examinations required by the Department, including the final oral; completed a dissertation that is an independent investigation in the major field and that constitutes a contribution to knowledge; and submitted for publication in Dissertation Abstracts International an abstract which meets the approval of the committee, then the committee approves the doctoral dissertation and makes an official recommendation to the Graduate School.

After successfully passing the oral defense and receiving approval of the project by the committee, the student will submit final documents in accordance with the guidelines of the Office of Graduate Studies.

**Continuing in the Ph.D. Program**

Each semester, the PPP faculty and by the Graduate Studies Committee XCOM evaluate student progress. At the end of the academic year (generally before 1 June) the head of the PPP program provides each student with a letter of evaluation via email.

Continuing in the Program depends on satisfactory progress, as determined by the Graduate School policies in the most current bulletin. The PPP faculty expects a consistent grade point average of at least 3.0 (though preferably a GPA higher than 3.8), no record of lingering incompletes, positive participation in and a clear commitment to the Program and satisfactory and timely progress toward academic requirements and the degree. Unsatisfactory commitment and progress could result in rescinded financial aid awards and cancelled teaching assistant opportunities, as well as a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies detailing a period of required probation. If the Program does not see satisfactory progress following a period of probation, the student could be dismissed from the Program. See the university's [probation and dismissal policies](#) for more information.

The OGS allows doctoral students a period of six years (twelve semesters) to complete their degrees. Doctoral candidates who have not completed their dissertation after six years of study will be reviewed by department faculty and the XCOM, who will decide whether to appeal the student's case for an extension or to terminate studies.

Additionally, University policy states that no student may teach more than 14 semesters as an Assistant Instructor (AI) and/or Teaching Assistant (TA). Although doctoral students

rarely reach this limit, it is conceivable that a doctoral student who enters the University as an M.A. may reach the 14 semester limit in his or her fifth year of doctoral study.

### **Accommodations and Leaves**

#### Accommodations

Students who require accommodations should contact and register with [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) (SSD). It is important to discuss approved accommodations with your advisor and professors.

#### Leaves of Absence

Leaves of Absence are highly discouraged, and should only be considered if necessary. Graduate students may apply for a leave of absence of no more than two semesters. A student on leave may not use any university facilities nor is the student entitled to receive advice from any member of the faculty. A leave of absence does not alter the time limits for degrees or course work. For information on requesting a Leave of Absence or Readmission refer to the Graduate School: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/leaves-of-absence>