The goal of the Master of Fine Arts Costume Design program: To provide students with training in the art and practice of costume design. The program is designed to give students skills they need to continue their growth as costume designers in the American theatre.

Students graduate with an in-depth knowledge of all aspects of costume design for the stage. Design work in opera, dance, and film is also explored. Costume technology is stressed as well, including skills in millinery, fabric modification, costume crafts and patterning. Each MFA Costume Design student will design at least three productions while at FSU. A portfolio of executed designs is required for graduation.

Costume Design Opportunities

FSU Productions
Graduate costume designers will have opportunities to assist and design smaller productions during their first year. They will then be given assignments designing larger productions during their second and third year. Students assist on two productions and design a minimum of three productions for the School of Theatre.

Other Design Work
Outside design opportunities with Opera Florida State, FSU Film School and the FSU Dance Department are available with instructor permission.

Teaching
While at FSU, students may be given the opportunity to teach undergraduate classes during their second and third year. Classes that have been taught by costume design graduate students include introductory costuming classes, Introduction to Theatrical Design and Stage Makeup.

Assistantship (20 hours per week)
Assistantship includes a tuition waiver for nine hours for each semester plus a stipend of approximately $12,000 for the year. Students must acquire in-state resident status by the end of their first year.

Semester Review

MFA Qualifying Exam
Each semester faculty review student’s progress regarding their performance on productions, class work, portfolio development and resume.

Productions and Practicum Work
One unique feature of the study at FSU is the practicum program. Practicum acknowledges the legitimacy of unique artistic production-oriented work not normally equated with classroom course work. The practicum program allows students and their advisers to plan and execute an individualized track to meet the students’ particular needs, interests and career goals.

The practicum for Costume Design students may include: Costume Designer; Assistant to the Costume Designer; Dyer/Painter; Milliner; Wigs/Make Up Designer; Pattern Maker.

School of Theatre Production Season
Six shows are fully produced per season including two musicals. Previous seasons have included The Miser, Putnam County Spelling Bee, Bus Stop, Intimate Apparel, Hamlet, The Drowsy Chaperone, Fat Pig, The Tortoise and the Hare, The Seagull and many more.

The School of Theatre at Florida State

For additional information about the program, the faculty, and how to apply, please visit: http://theatre.fsu.edu/graduate.
Classes

Advanced Costume Design
Explores various periods of costume history through theatrical design projects. Special sections of the class are devoted to: Costume research techniques – traditional and Internet; Textiles – fibers and fabric identification and knowledge of weaves; Production process – from script to dress rehearsals; Communication process – director and the design team; Professional costume designers – current and past; Resume and portfolio development.

Dance Costume Design and Film and TV Costume Design
Explores other areas of costume design including: film, dance, commercials, musical reviews, etc., through projects, research and discussion of venues. Special sections of the class are devoted to: Production and costume photography techniques; Research techniques from actual historical period garments; Job search, interviewing, contracts, career opportunities.

Costume Technology Classes
Pattern – Flat Pattern and Draping; Millinery (buckram construction, felt and straw blocking, wire frame); Fabric Modification (dyeing techniques, hand painting and printing) Costume Crafts (masks, crowns, armor, jewelry, etc.), Wig and Makeup Design.

Other Required Classes
Costume History Seminar, which includes research techniques from actual historical period garments; Graduate Dramaturgy or Play Analysis; Advanced Costume Rendering; Computer Costume Rendering and Costume Rendering Workshop

Electives
Advanced Costume Construction / Tailoring; Costume Museum Research; Period Draping.

Costume Shop Equipment and Facilities

Sewing / Patterning Room:
Industrial sewing machines; Industrial hemmer; Overlock machines; Industrial steam iron and table; Domestic sewing machines including Bernina; Several large cutting tables; Industrial dress forms in various sizes/styles; Extensive period pattern files

Dye and Craft Room: Industrial dye vat; Industrial hood vent; Industrial dryer; Safety station - eyewash and emergency shower; Workbench and work tables; Fabric steamer; Patch machine for leather; Hat steamer and other millinery equipment such as hat blocks; Flammables cabinet and other cabinets for craft and dye supplies

Costume Storage: Large hanging stock with costumes organized by period, type, gender, and size; Large folded stock in labeled boxes organized by period, type, gender, and size; Hat and shoe room organized by period, type, gender, and size

Laundry Room, Wig Room and Dressing Rooms

Application and Admission

The following criteria must be met for consideration of acceptance into the program:

1. A Bachelor’s Degree in Theatre from an accredited college or university. (Students who do not hold a Theatre degree must show evidence of substantial coursework and/or experience in theatre to indicate probability of achieving success in advanced theatre studies.)

2. A grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) during the last two years of study for a bachelor’s degree, or of 3.0 on a master’s degree from an accredited institution; OR have acceptable scores on the verbal and quantitative portions of the Graduate Record Examination taken within the last 5 years.

3. All applicants must participate in an interview and portfolio review session, either in Tallahassee or at recruiting sites such as URTA or LINK.

4. Applicants must submit a completed School of Theatre application, three current letters of recommendation, current resume, and a statement of purpose.

5. Specific approval of the program director within the School of Theatre.

For admissions procedures contact the Office of Academic and Student Services at 850.644.7234.

Faculty and Staff

Colleen Muscha
Professor, Director of the MFA Costume Design Program

Martha H. Cooper
Associate Professor, Costume Technology

Claire M. Walker
Costume Studio Manager

Michele Belson
Costumer

CONTACT INFORMATION

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