



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

MFA COSTUME DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY SUMMARY

Fall 2024-25 Admissions

COURSE WORK

COSTUME DESIGN COURSES

Costume Design Classes

- Various periods and style of theatre, opera, dance and entertainment design
- Best practices, including collaborative thinking, script analysis, research techniques, fabric knowledge, oral and visual communication skills, costume paperwork, fitting protocols, and dress rehearsals
- Business of costume design, including self-promotion, resumes, website development, and networking
- Textile identification, use, and understanding

Historic Costume Seminar

- Lectures exploring the history of human adornment from Neolithic – 2000 CE
- Explores a range of Western and non-Western cultures
- Development and presentations of student research

Traditional Rendering Classes

- Exploration of various rendering media from the basics (watercolor, colored pencil) to more unusual materials (fluid acrylics, mixed media, UV reactive renderings, etc.)
- Drawing a variety of body types, racial identities, and visible disabilities
- Figure drawing and managing human proportion
- Selecting, rendering, and understanding various fabrics

Digital Rendering Class

- Digital painting techniques, including emulating traditional media, special effects renderings, and digital fabric manipulation
- Digital collage techniques
- Designing repeat textile print to be used on the FSU digital textile printer
- Taught using a range of painting software, including Adobe Photoshop, Procreate for iPad, and Adobe Fresco

COSTUME TECHNOLOGY COURSES

Patterning and Draping

- Basic and advanced techniques

Period Patterning Classes (4)

- Medieval to Mid-20th Century womenswear and menswear

Couture Sewing

- Standard and specialty techniques that are used in costume construction

Specialty Construction and Patterning Classes

- Corsets and Crinolines
- Tailoring

Costume Crafts

- Costume crafts materials for armor and masks, including thermoplastics, leather, EVA foam, vacuum forming, and others
- Mold making and casting

- Jewelry techniques

Fabric Modification

- Information of the various dye types and color matching
- Decorative dye and surface techniques such as shibori, devoré, discharge, silkscreen, block print techniques, and the use of our digital textile printing machine
- Distressing techniques
- Airbrush and stencil techniques

Millinery

- Soft construction (flat caps, cut-and-sew hats)
- Millinery patterning
- Buckram construction
- Felt blocking
- Wire frame techniques
- Straw braid techniques
- Millinery trimming and decoration

WIG AND MAKE-UP COURSES

Wigs and Make-Up

- Wig care and period styling
- Ventilating lace front wigs and facial hair
- Research into period hair and makeup

THEATRE STUDIES COURSES

Dramaturgy, Play Analysis, History of Theatrical Design and Production etc.

MFA CREATIVE FINAL PROJECT and CREATIVE DEFENSE – COSTUME DESIGN

Third Year—Design of a season subscription production or theoretical project developed in partnership with faculty, portfolio of production work, and portfolio of the three years of graduate class work

MFA CREATIVE FINAL PROJECT and CREATIVE DEFENSE – COSTUME TECHNOLOGY

Third Year: Draping for a season subscription production or creative draping project developed in partnership with faculty, technology production work, and portfolio of the three years of graduate class work

OUTSIDE OPPORTUNITIES

- Occasionally internships at suitable regional theatres may also be arranged for internship credit. Students have also interned in New York City working as design assistants and in the various costume shops. This preferably happens during the summer.
- London Theatre Experience: Study in London during a summer. This opportunity is not covered by the assistantship. The London Theatre Experience usually involves independent research at museums such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Museum of Costume in Bath, England, London Museum, various London professional theaters and costume shops, etc.
- FSU Clothing and Textiles Department has a fine vintage and antique clothing collection from which students often conduct research

PRODUCTION WORK

SUBSCRIPTION SEASON (SUPPORTED WORK)

- Musicals (2) – 2023-24 titles are *9 to 5* and *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*
- Modern or classical plays (2) – 2023-24 titles are *Imogen Says Nothing* and *Everybody*
- Theatre for Young Audiences (1) – 2023-24 title is *Don't Let Pigeon Drive the Bus!*

THEATRE SPACES

- Fallon—Subscription productions on our 475-seat proscenium stage
- Lab Theatre—Subscription productions in our more intimate 150-seat black boxspace
- Studio Theatre—Act II productions in this smaller 250-seat proscenium stage

COSTUME BUDGETS

- Costume budgets for subscription productions range from \$800 to \$4,500+.
- Unsupported works provide the cost of dry cleaning. These include the Act II season (2—4 plays), Shakespeare Short Cuts, Devised Works and the Social Issues Projects

DESIGN/TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE SCHOOL OF THEATRE

- Students may design 1 to 3 shows while at FSU and will work as a draper, first hand, crafts artisan, milliner, wardrobe head, and/or other positions depending on career goals

OTHER DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- With advisor approval, students have occasionally designed costumes for the FSU dance department, opera department and film school

COSTUME SHOP PERSONNEL

- Full time costume shop manager
- Wigs/makeup staff
- Over-hire during larger production periods
- Costume design graduates
- BA costume lab students
- Work study students

COSTUME SHOP FACILITIES

- Main Shop: Numerous sewing machines and sergers, both domestic (Bernina) and industrial, a Bernina embroidery machine, and a blind hemmer, etc.
- Crafts Room: Leather patch machine, dye vat, stove, digital textile printer and steamer, industrial clothes dryer, exhaust vent, laundry sink, hat blocks and steamer, etc.
- Laundry Room: Washers and dryer
- Stock Rooms: 3250+ square feet of costume storage including built, modern, vintage, and antique pieces

LIVING & WORKING IN TALLAHASSEE

- Capital of Florida—city of 285,000+ population
- Located a short distance from the Georgia border in the Big Bend area of Florida near the Gulf Coast
- Vibe: Tallahassee is a laid-back small city centered around two large universities and the Florida Statehouse. It features a lot of nature including canopied roads, live oaks covered in Spanish moss, hiking trails, and several nearby state parks. Tallahassee features a range eccentric boutiques and small restaurants (board game bars, vintage stores, local coffee shops), local events (First Fridays on Railroad Square, various recurring markets, bookstore events, etc.), and an enthusiastic college sports culture.
- Free university-provided transportation is available to those who live on or near FSU campus. If you plan to live further off campus, you will need a car. Mass transit options in Tallahassee are limited.
- Local shopping for garments and shoes includes chain retailers stores like Macy's, Dillard's, JC Penney, TJ Maxx, DSW, Shoe Dept Encore, and others.
- Fabric Stores: Upholstery stores, Jo-Ann's Fabric Store, Walmart. The department sponsors a yearly fabric shopping trip to Atlanta to supplement these options.
- Travel: Tallahassee has a small international airport and a Greyhound Bus terminal. Larger airports like Jacksonville and Orlando are 2-3.5 hours away.
- Housing: Graduate students can opt for on-campus housing. Most graduate students elect to live off campus. Our current graduate students report paying an average of \$870 in rent. Some live alone, which is more expensive (\$1100), and some live with roommates, which is more economical (\$400).
- Weather: Tallahassee experiences mild winters (average high temperature in December is 64, low is 47) and hot summers (average high in July is 92 and average low is 72). Monthly average temperatures are available on usclimatedata.com. Tallahassee experiences occasional tropical storm conditions during which the university closes for student and staff safety.

COSTUME DESIGN ALUMNI

Current positions of alumni include technology positions in various NYC costume shops, assistant designers in NYC, showcase productions in NYC and off-Broadway, design assistants on television series and major feature films, designers at regional LORT theatres, costume shop manager for regional theatre (La Jolla), draper at regional and summer theatre costume shops (The Guthrie, Glimmerglass Festival), university faculty across the US, costume designer at Disney Creative Entertainment, drapers, costume crafts artisans, etc.

APPLYING TO THE MFA COSTUME DESIGN PROGRAM

APPLICATION PROCESS

- *First*, please send an email expressing your official interest in the program to Jen Gillette at jgillette@fsu.edu. Please do this as early as possible to open communication with the department and help be sure you are being considered in the pool of applicants. Please indicate whether you are interested in the design or technology concentration.
- *Second*, please start the School of Theatre application on-line **no later than February 10th**
 - The applications are available on the FSU web site: <https://admissions.fsu.edu/gradapp/>
 - Applicants are advised to visit the FSU Web Page at <http://theatre.fsu.edu/>
- *Third*, you must schedule your interview and visit to the FSU School of Theatre.
 - Interviews are available at USITT Connect, URTA, USITT, or by visiting campus.
 - Domestic applicants are required to visit the FSU School of Theatre prior to admissions decisions and assistantship offers. Applicants should plan to spend at least one full day on campus sitting in on classes and spending the afternoon in the costume shop.
 - international applicants are strongly encouraged to visit, but arrangements may be made for a remote visit.
- Offers will be made no earlier than mid-February. Admissions will close once all assistantships have been accepted.

ASSISTANTSHIPS

- Four assistantships are offered every year. Two will be offered to Costume Design concentration students two will be offered to Costume Technology concentration students.
- Assistantship covers both in and out-of-state full tuition waiver and a stipend of around **\$18,000** for the academic year, with an average 1% raise each year.
- Students usually work in the costume shop for an average of 20 hours a week for their assistantship. More hours will occur during tech week. Students are asked to track their hours so shop management can release students for days off later in the semester proportionate to overtime worked. There are occasional Saturday work calls the week before first dress.
- During the second and third years, there are opportunities to teach an entry level undergraduate costume class such as Costuming 1, Introduction to Theatrical Design, and Introduction to Costume Crafts. When teaching a course, a student's time in the costume shop for assistantship hours is reduced to 10 hours per week.
- MFA Design work is not considered a part of the assistantship work, as it counts toward course credit.

CHECK LIST FOR ADMISSION INCLUDES

- University Graduate application
 - Begin your application at <http://admissions.fsu.edu/>
 - Requires a one-time \$30 application fee*
- Supporting Materials (to be uploaded within the University Application)
 - Current Resume or CV
 - Statement of Purpose: one page maximum
 - Official Transcripts. (If you are still currently taking classes, please upload a current unofficial copy. Once you graduate you will need to request that an official copy be sent to Florida State University.)
 - Three Letters of Recommendation

- A minimum upper-division GPA of 3.0
- Interview at URTA, USITT Connect, USITT, or at FSU
 - Portfolio Review – Costume Designers
 - Swatched renderings from at least 2-3 productions, one of which was realized on stage or film
 - Photos of realized designs on stage or film
 - Samples of work showing costume construction skills
 - Samples of costume design paperwork
 - Additional relevant artwork may be included, such as life drawings, watercolors, fiber art, costume crafts, etc.
 - Portfolio Review – Costume Technicians
 - Realized costume construction work from productions and classwork
 - Samples of work showing costume construction and patterning skills
 - Samples of costume craft skills including millinery, dye work, masks, armor, etc. and/or samples of wig and makeup work
 - Additional relevant artwork may be included, such as knitting, crocheting, fiber arts, embroidery, etc.
- A minimum passing score on an official English Language Proficiency test
 - This requirement is only for international applicants whose native language is not English
 - More information can be found here:
<https://gradschool.fsu.edu/admissions/international-admissions>
- An On-Campus Visit is required for formal acceptance to the program.
 - Plan on visiting campus in January or February. Domestic students are required to visit. International students are strongly encouraged to visit.
 - We highly recommend coming either leading up to or during one of our productions. *The Great Comet* dresses February 17,19, and 20, 2024 and begins its run February 21. Performance dates and times can be found on the School of Theatre website:
<https://tickets.theatre.fsu.edu/Online/default.asp>
 - Please contact jgillette@fsu.edu so that a beneficial visit for you can be arranged.
- This program accepts a limited number of students each year and decisions are released on a first come first served, so do not wait to get your application in and visit campus.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, feel free to email us. You may also email a few of the current costume graduate students to get a student point of view of the program, the faculty, Tallahassee (housing, etc.) and FSU (campus, fees, books, library, student fees, etc.)

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Sarah Travis (she/they)	Set23a@fsu.edu	Second Year Grad
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FACULTY AND STAFF CONTACTS

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