**M.F.A. in Theatre – Arts Leadership Program**

**Structure**
Over the three-year period of the program, each student will work closely with Amanda Nelson, the program’s primary advisor, and have available the knowledge and talent of the entire Theatre Arts faculty whose members contribute to the student’s program of study. M.F.A. students may also take courses from other departments across the Virginia Tech campus.

Led by the primary advisor and in consultation with the student’s graduate committee, the student will develop a personalized plan of study specifically tailored to her/his own experience, needs, and goals.

Each student is evaluated and graded on how well she/he achieves the goals of the program of study by demonstrating growth and development in the overarching areas. The evaluation is an on-going process and includes graded class projects and assignments. End of semester graduate committee reviews provide another method for evaluation.

The degree requires a *minimum* of 60 credit hours and a B or better grade average. To maintain assistantship support, students must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours each semester.

**Practical, hands-on projects form the foundation of the program, challenging students to think critically, problem solve, and respond creatively.**

**Service to the School and Hands-On Learning**
A key area of practical experience is provided through assistantships. Typically, in the first year of the program, students in the Arts Leadership program will be assigned to work 20 hours a week in the Management Office of the School of Performing Arts. The Management Office is responsible for marketing/publicity and front of house duties for School productions. *In the second year of the program, an assistantship in the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech is possible, providing practical experience in a professional arts center.*

**Theatre and Event Production and the Arts Leadership Program**
Fundamental to the program is the direct connection of theory to practice. To ensure that students in the Arts Leadership program have the opportunity for study and experience in multiple facets of theatre production:

- All students in the M.F.A. program will participate in the Graduate Seminar during their first two years of the program. (See description in “Courses” section below for more details.)
- Students may be assigned assistantships in the management office, costume or scene shop, or students may serve as a graduate teaching assistant in the classroom. (Students are placed “where” needed.)
- Coursework will, when possible, be directly tied to and connected with productions or projects in the School of Performing Arts or arts and cultural organizations in the region.
- Each summer, students are strongly encouraged to find work and/or volunteer opportunities with a theatre or performing arts organization in a role consistent with career goals.

**Coursework**
Our curriculum is designed to provide both practical experience and in-depth exploration through the study of a range of topics relevant to the field today. Courses may be conducted in small groups or one-on-one (independent study). Arts Leadership classes are specifically designed to promote discussion, examination, and hands-on exploration.
Following are the courses in our core curriculum. Please note that due to the intimate size of our program, and to ensure that each cohort has the opportunity to study these core areas, the classes are offered on a rotating basis. Students may select to repeat topics through an independent study to allow for more in-depth study and practice over time.

**TA 5614 Topics in Arts Leadership I: Leadership and Community Engagement (3 credits)**
This course explores leadership theory through collaborative projects and community engagement. As part of the course, you will be assigned to work on a community engagement project for the Moss Arts Center. The project may be connected to specific events, performances, and exhibitions, or independently designed to broaden or deepen the Center's engagement mission in new ways.

**TA 5614 Topics in Arts Leadership I: Board Governance and Leadership (3 credits)**
This course provides an in-depth look at aspects of nonprofit board governance and leadership. Governance is distinguished here by an in-depth look at the structural aspects of nonprofit work including legal framework, history, legal requirements federal and state, fiduciary responsibility, and other aspects of nonprofit board governance. Leadership is distinguished here by an in-depth look at the work done within that structure to ensure mission accomplishment including definition of roles and responsibilities, board and executive relationship, ethics, performance evaluation, and other aspects of board leadership.

**TA 5614 Topics in Arts Leadership I: Arts Advocacy and Political Change (3 credits)**
Arts advocacy exists at every level of our society- from local to national. This course provides the opportunity for both theoretical exploration and hands-on practice in arts advocacy. Topics include: current climate and trends in arts advocacy and policy; arts education and policy; creative placemaking and cultural tourism; and social justice and community dialogue. Guest speakers augment readings and research.

**TA 5624 Topics in Arts Leadership II: Development (fundraising) (3 credits)**
The topics course in development is designed to introduce terms and concepts; examine traditional development strategies and tactics; research and explore new trends in the field; and study the use of data in fundraising. The following facets of development will be included in the class: individual giving, foundation and government support, corporate sponsorships, special events, and capital and endowment campaigns. Field projects (pro-bono consulting for area arts organizations) and guest speakers augment readings and discussion.

**TA 5624 Topics in Arts Leadership II: Arts Marketing and Publicity (3 credits)**
This course is designed to provide the opportunity for an examination of both traditional marketing tactics and new trends in the field (including dynamic pricing and data analysis). Guest speakers and field projects (pro-bono consulting for area arts organizations) augment readings and class discussions.

**TA 5634 Topics in Arts Leadership III: Financial Management in the Arts (3 credits)**
This course is designed to introduce terms and concepts; provide hands-on practice in budget development; and present a survey of financial considerations and financial reporting for nonprofit and commercial performing arts organizations.

**TA 5634 Topics in Arts Leadership III: Strategic Management and Long-Range Planning in the Arts (3 credits)**
This course is designed to introduce terms and concepts; analyze planning processes; research trends in developing and implementing organizational strategies (including capacity building, change capital, and
balancing artistic and administrative initiatives); and examine how data is used in the strategic and long-range planning process. Hands on projects and guest speakers augment readings and class discussions.

**TA 5634 Topics in Arts Leadership III: Human Resources in the Arts (3 credits)**
This course provides opportunities for study and exploration of topics including: team building and organizational culture, organizational structures, recruitment and hiring, terminations/layoffs, managing volunteers, and contract/union negotiation. Hands-on projects, class discussions, and readings are augmented through class visits by professionals working in human resources.

**TA 5015 Graduate Seminar: Creativity, Collaboration, and Artistic Decision Making (3 credits)**
The graduate seminar on Creativity, Collaboration, and Artistic Decision Making is an opportunity for students in the MFA Theatre program to discover and share commonalities and interconnections among the various program areas. The course will explore approaches to and strategies for cultivating creativity and collaboration; examine techniques and processes involved in artistic decision making; and survey arts entrepreneurship as it relates to individual career goals. Research-based and applied projects along with guest speakers augment readings and discussion. *This course is offered as part of the Graduate Seminar rotation and affords an opportunity for all students in the MFA Theatre Program to discover and share commonalities and interconnections among the various program areas.*

**All M.F.A. in Theatre students participate in the Graduate Seminar, a two-year, weekly seminar that examines issues and topics in the field. This series of courses provides students from all of the M.F.A. in Theatre program areas to study and collaborate together.**

**Electives**
The program allows for exploration across fields, and students are encouraged to develop a Plan of Study that encompasses courses from the School of Performing Arts and from programs across campus, including classes in Business, Communication, Leadership and Social Change, Management, Education, Communication and Urban Affairs and Planning.

**Internship**
The M.F.A. program requires, at minimum, a full semester internship designed to provide professional practice and strong positioning for career advancement upon graduation. The internship is typically conducted in the third year of the program.

**Final Project**
The M.F.A. program culminates with a final project that integrates the practical and academic experiences of the student synthesizing skills acquired through the program. Both a written report and oral presentation of the project are required.