

# SRSU Theatre and Film Majors

## Senior Project Guidelines

### Overview

The senior project is an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they have learned during their years as Theatre and Film majors as well as to have a student-generated experience in their field of concentration.

### Selecting a Project

Each student should propose a project, in consultation with a faculty advisor, that represents the focus of their work as a Theatre/Film major. Ideally, a student will have had both classes and experiences in the area they select. For example, a student interested in lighting design will have completed several classes in design and sought experience in this area.

### Examples of Senior Projects

The following are examples of project possibilities. There are many other examples and this is not intended to be a complete list, you may create a proposal outside of these suggestions. Please see individual guidelines for more details for each area to assist in the selection process.

#### Directing

Direct a one-act play

Direct a series of scenes centered around a theme

Performances are to be between 20-25 minutes. The full faculty must approve of any exceptions.

#### Acting

Perform a one-person show

Perform a selection of scenes and/or monologues centered around a theme

Perform a one-act play

After being cast in a major role, chronicle the character creation process from preparation through performance.

Performances are to be between 20-25 minutes. The full faculty must approve any exceptions.

#### Design

(Scenery, lighting, costumes, sound or props of a significant nature)

Design a main season show (only students with extensive experience will be approved for this project), design a student-run show/senior project.

## Playwriting

Write a one-act play to be presented in a staged reading.

(Readings are to be between 20 -25 minutes. The full faculty must approve any exceptions)

## Scholarly Research

Write a research paper in the area of Theatre History or Dramatic Literature/Criticism

## Dramaturgy

Complete dramaturgical research for a hypothetical production, or, in certain cases, serve as the dramaturg for a faculty-directed production.

## Stage Management

Stage manage a main season show

## Film

Writing a feature-length script, plus research binder

Producing a 9-12 minute short film, plus submission of pre-production/production book

Directing a 9-12 minute short film, plus submission of pre-production/production book

Any combination of two below-the-line, head-of-department positions on two approved senior projects, from the following list:

- i. Director of photography, plus submission of production book
- ii. Location AND post sound (considered one job), plus submission of production book
- iii. Editing, plus submission of production book
- iv. Production designer, plus submission of production book
- v. Writer of short, plus submission of production book
- vi. AD, plus submission of production reports and production book

## Other Areas

A student is welcome to propose a project in an area other than those listed above (Theatre in Education, Theatre for Young Audiences, a project integrating other fields, etc.)

## Getting the Project Approved: The Proposal

Each student must write a proposal outlining the project they wish to undertake. The chair will distribute the proposal to theatre faculty for approval. The full faculty must approve each project proposal before work is continued. **Senior project proposals are due the finals week of the semester before they are graduating. (Example: The student is graduating in Fall Semester so their proposal is due the finals week of the Spring semester before). You will also want to secure a faculty advisor for your Senior Project.**

This typed, proofread proposal should include the following:

1. A clear description of the project.
2. Why this project appeals to you and why you feel it is worthwhile.
3. What challenges the project presents and what experience and courses you have that prepare you to face them.
4. There will be a Senior Theatre/Film Project Festival the second week of November for the fall and the second week of April every year that there are projects. Projects will be presented/performed/screened over the course of that week.

For performance projects also include:

5. Technical components requirements (sets, lights, props/furniture, sound, costumes, crew).
6. The number of other people to be involved.
7. The length (it should be between 20-25 minutes, if it is much over/under this please explain).
8. Small budget outlined (licensing, specific props, materials, etc).

The faculty will give final approval to each project and any feedback. Once the project is approved, the student and faculty advisor will agree on a timeline for completion.

## **Budget**

Projects needing funding will be given a small budget of maximum \$300 that students must work within. Students are *not* allowed to spend their own money on senior projects but can fundraise if they choose to. Design students will be working within the department's design budget. The department will also pay any required royalties and arrange for the copying of posters and programs that students provide for their projects. Students must keep projects simple and work within budget demands. For instance, acting and directing projects must not require complicated technical or design support. Working within a prescribed budget is part of the project experience.

## **The Process**

The artistic process is as important as the final result. Those artists who are self-disciplined and able to work independently, who are well prepared and who apply energy to every stage of a project are the artists who will have the most success in their chosen profession. Therefore, each student will be evaluated on how well they complete each stage of the project as well as on the quality of the final product. A student who works day and night for two weeks before a show opens but has not rehearsed for the first dozen weeks of the semester will not have fulfilled the expectations of the senior project.

During the artistic process phase, students will arrange to meet with their faculty advisor and they will work together to set deadlines for each phase of research/preparation and production/execution. The student is to take the lead in developing a schedule and to assume responsibility for meeting deadlines.

At the start of the production phase, there will be a meeting for all involved seniors, their advisors, the department chair and the technical director to coordinate the presentation of projects, poster/program and printing concerns, and budgeting.

## **Mid-Semester Review**

To ensure students stay on track during the production phase, each project will undergo a review by the faculty (the faculty advisor). Students will be informed of the review date at the beginning of their production semester.

The faculty may decide to postpone or cancel outright any project not demonstrating adequate and suitable progress during the review.

## **Theatre Directing Requirements**

The student director, in consultation with their faculty advisor, will select a suitable directing project which may include a one-act play, a cutting from a longer play, or a selection of scenes centered around a primary theme. The actual playing time should be 20-25 minutes.

### **Directing Preparation Phase**

The student director must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various research phases. In preparation for the presentation of the piece, the student director must compile the following information which will be presented in a binder at the end of the semester:

1. Concept statement.
2. Coordinate with Robbyn to request and acquire rights.
3. A bibliography of the playwright(s) other significant works.
4. Applicable biographical information as it pertains to the selected piece(s).
5. Research of relevant topics necessary to understand the play (period or place in which the play is set, issues the characters face, events or ideas mentioned in the play, etc.)
6. An analysis of the play being staged (or the play that the scene(s) are coming from). Include an explanation of the theme, a breakdown of the play's structure, and a discussion of the main characters. Also identify other elements relevant to your project such as given circumstances, use of language, moods, tempos, tone, imagery, etc.
7. A prompt script for the play, with clearly marked beats.
8. A ground plan for set designer (necessary playing areas example: a living room, kitchen area are needed).
9. Technical requirements (use of lighting, costumes, set, and sound elements). Please remember that technical support is limited. As the director, you must decide how best to utilize what is available to you.
10. A rehearsal plan.
11. A reflection journal detailing the creative process.
12. Any additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by your faculty advisor.

### **Directing Production Phase**

- Schedule regular meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track. Your faculty advisor will request to attend selected rehearsals.

- Hold open auditions to cast the project
- Schedule and run rehearsals.
- Be prepared to present the piece mid-way through the semester a date will be agreed upon at the beginning of the semester with the faculty advisor); the piece will be presented to the theatre faculty. If sufficient preparation isn't demonstrated, the student director will not be allowed to present the project at the end of the semester.
- Work with faculty designer/technical director regarding the requirements of the presentation via production meetings.
- Acquire all props and set pieces.
- Student will prepare a program for their project. Department will print.
- Stage project on scheduled presentation date for the general public.

### **Acting Requirements**

The student actor, in consultation with their faculty advisor, will select appropriate material with a playing time of around 20-25 minutes. Options include performing a one-person show, two-person one-act, or selected scenes from one or more playwrights, linked by a relevant theme, or if cast in a major role the actor may write about that process. The actor will receive regular guidance from the faculty advisor, but acting projects (outside of main season) are not faculty-directed. If the senior wants to engage a fellow student to direct, this must be approved by the faculty advisor.

### **Acting Preparation Phase**

The student actor must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various research phases. In preparation for the presentation of the piece the student actor must compile the following information which will be presented in a binder at the end of the semester.

1. Concept statement (as applicable).
2. Coordinate with Robbyn to request and acquire rights.
3. A bibliography of the playwright(s) other significant works as well as production reviews, etc.
4. Applicable biographical information as it pertains to the selected piece(s).
5. A thorough character analysis for all characters to be portrayed.
6. A rehearsal script for the material, with beats, actions, and objectives marked.
7. A ground plan for set designer (necessary playing areas example: a living room, kitchen area are needed).
8. An analysis of the play being staged (or the play that the scene(s) are coming from). Include an explanation of the theme, a breakdown of the play's structure, and a discussion of the main characters. Also identify other elements relevant to your project such as given circumstances, use of language, moods, tempos, tone, imagery, etc.
9. A journal detailing the creative process.

10. Any additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by faculty advisor.

### **Acting Production Phase**

- Prepare a rehearsal schedule and hold rehearsals, develop character, memorize/prepare role.
- Schedule regular meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track. The faculty advisor will request to attend selected rehearsals.
- Be prepared to present piece mid-way through the semester for the theatre faculty (specific date to be announced at the beginning of the semester); if sufficient preparation isn't demonstrated, the student actor will not be allowed to present the project at the end of the semester.
- Student will prepare a program for their project. Department will print.
- Stage project on scheduled presentation date for the general public.

### **Design Requirements**

The student designer, in consultation with their faculty advisor, will select a suitable design project which may include designing costumes, lighting, scenery, sound or props for another senior's acting or directing project, or possibly for a main stage production. Student designers will work closely with faculty advisor to determine an appropriate design project.

### **Design Preparation Phase**

The student designer must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for completion of various research phases. In preparation for the realization of the chosen design, the student designer must compile the following information which will be presented in a binder at the end of the preparation semester.

1. A brief overview of the production history of the piece.
2. If applicable, the director's or producer's concept statement.
3. A written description of specific techniques the designer intends to employ to make the final project reflect the ideas in the concept statement.
4. Appropriate pre-production graphic presentations, schedules and paperwork as described below.
5. Research materials including artwork or photographs.
6. A journal detailing the creative process.
7. Any additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by your faculty advisor.

See breakdown below for each discipline:

### **Scene Design**

- Research
- Thumbnail sketches

- Preliminary ground plan sketches

- Scene Breakdown

### **Lighting Design**

- Color rendering of at least two moments from the production

- Gel samples

- Scene Breakdown

### **Costume Design**

- Color renderings of each major costume (at least 11 inches high)

### **Properties Design**

- Thumbnail sketches of all built props

- Prop list

### **Design Production Phase**

For the rehearsal and presentation:

- Prepare a work -flow schedule.

- Schedule regular meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track.

- Complete project on scheduled due date.

### **Scene Design**

(see advisor for further instruction)•

- Sketches

- Ground plan

- Section

- Model

- Elevations for each scenic element to be built

- Production Binder/research

- Painter's Elevations

- Shift schedule

## **Lighting Design**

\*See advisor for further instruction

- Research
- Light plot
- Section
- Instrument schedule
- Dimmer schedule
- Magic sheet
- Color list
- Production/Research Binder

## **Costume Design**

- Swatches of fabric to be used
- Costume Plot
- Quick change schedule (if applicable)
- At least one hand-drawn or draped pattern

## **Properties Design**

\*see advisor for further instruction

- Working drawings of all built props
- Shift schedule (broken down by scenes)
- Props list
- Budget itemization

## **Playwriting Requirements**

The student playwright, in consultation with their faculty advisor, will write an original play and present the play in a staged reading form for an audience. The project's scope will be determined by the playwright and faculty advisor, and may be a long one-act or a number of short plays organized around a unifying theme or concept. The playwright will organize a reading of his/her work that will be no longer than 25 minutes, regardless of the final play's length.

## **Playwriting Preparation Phase**



The student playwright must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various research phases. In preparation for the playwriting project, the student playwright must compile the following to be presented in a binder at the end of the semester:

- Research as designated by faculty advisor.
- Preparatory writing exercises (including an outline of the entire project, character sketches, and initial drafts of some scenes).
- A reflection journal detailing the creative process.
- Complete any outside readings as assigned by faculty advisor.

### **Playwriting Production Phase**

The production phase of the playwriting production will include:

- Developmental readings of the script with actors.
- Final polishing and revision of the script.
- Regular meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track. Faculty advisor will request to attend selected rehearsals.
- Rehearsal of the script in collaboration with director and actors.
- Staged reading performance of script of no more than 25 minutes in length.

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## **Senior Project Scholarly Research Requirements**

The scholarly research project consists of the development of an original thesis and research plan, in-depth scholarly research, and the writing, revision, and presentation of a final academic paper of **at least 20 pages**. The topic of the paper, developed in consultation with the faculty advisor, may be in the area of theatre history or dramatic literature/criticism, depending on the student's primary academic interest and strengths.

### **Research Preparation Phase**

The student researcher must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various research phases.

The student researcher is expected to compile the following information:

1. Original thesis statement.
2. Compiled research and bibliography, MLA formatting.
3. Outline and preliminary organization of research material.
4. Rough draft of introduction and thesis statement.

5. Additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by your faculty advisor.

### **Research Production Phase**

The production phase of the research project will include:

- Writing research paper.
- Revision of research paper.
- Regularly schedule meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track.
- A ten to fifteen minute oral summary of research findings presented to theatre faculty and students on scheduled presentation date.

### **Senior Project Dramaturgy Requirements**

Students can undertake dramaturgical research for a hypothetical production, or, in certain cases, for a faculty-directed production. The dramaturgical work will include detailed work on the proposed play as well as extensive research. The project will culminate in the creation of a well-organized, informative, and comprehensive research binder of potential use to producers of the chosen play and possibly materials suitable for a program and pre-show lobby display.

### **Research Phase**

The student dramaturg must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various research phases. In preparation for the realization of the project, the student dramaturg must compile the following information that will be presented in a binder at the end of the preparation semester.

- Detailed script analysis. Include an explication of the theme, a breakdown of the play's structure, and a discussion of the main characters. Also identify other elements relevant to your project such as given circumstances, use of language, moods, tempos, tone, imagery, etc.
- Dramaturg's Research Notebook.
- Vocabulary.
- References made in script to events, phrases/jargon of the time.
- Location/Geography.
- Architecture/Furniture/Visuals used in script.
- Key events from the time period.
- Politics/Religion that relate to script.
- Economics.
- Social/Ethnic issues.

- Images.
- Themes.
- Bibliography.
- Other items that may relate to the script.
- Reviews of past productions (collect reviews, highlight useful information).
- Biography of playwright, with sources.
- List of works of playwright.
- Prepare presentation for a first rehearsal (including important background information, visuals, video clips) as directed by advisor.
- A reflection paper/journal detailing the creative process.
- Additional readings with written response, assignments or activities as directed by your faculty advisor.

### **Production Phase**

The production phase of the dramaturgy project will include:

- Scheduling regular meetings with your faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track
- If working on realized production, attending rehearsals (table readings and additional rehearsals as directed) and meetings with director.
- Making a presentation at an early rehearsal.
- Depending on project details: creating program notes, lobby display or presenting a pre-show/post-show lecture.
- Completing other assignments as needed.

## **Senior Project Stage Management Requirements**

The student stage manager first must obtain approval from a faculty director and faculty designer to stage manage a main season show.

### **Stage Management Preparation Phase**

The student stage manager must schedule regular meetings with their faculty advisor (the faculty designer/technical director) to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various research phases. In preparation, the student stage manager must compile the following information which will be presented in a binder at the end of the semester.

1. See SRSU Stage Management Handbook.
2. A brief overview of the production history of the piece.

3. If applicable, the director's concept statement.
4. A scene breakdown, character plot, cue synopsis as appropriate (scenery, lights, costumes, props, sound, effects).
5. A journal detailing the creative process.
6. Additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by faculty advisor.

### **Production Phase**

The production phase of the stage management project will include:

- Creating a well-organized prompt book.
- Attending all rehearsals and performances and completing stage managing duties.
- Attending production meetings.
- Facilitating communication between all production staff.
- Scheduling regular meetings with your faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track.

## **Senior Project Film Requirements**

The student film director and producer, in consultation with their faculty advisors, will select a suitable directing project which may include a 9-12 minute short fiction or documentary film.

### **Film Producing Preproduction Phase**

The student producer must schedule regular meetings with his/her faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various phases. In preparation for the presentation of the piece, the student film producer must compile the following information which will be presented in a binder at the end of the semester:

1. Concept statement
2. Script/Storyboard. Secure rights to script via signed legal contract.
3. Technical requirements (use of lighting, costumes, set, and sound elements). Please remember that technical support is limited. As the director, you must decide how best to utilize what is available to you.
4. Create a budget.
5. Scout/Secure locations.
6. Hold auditions to cast the project.
7. Assemble production crew as needed.
8. Secure signed releases / SAG waivers (if needed) for all on-camera talent.

9. In collaboration with your director and AD, prepare a shooting schedule.
10. Acquire all props and set pieces.
11. A journal detailing the creative process.
12. Any additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by your faculty advisor

### **Producing Production Phase**

- Schedule regular meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track. Your faculty advisor will request to attend selected production meetings.
- maintain production schedule.
- Be prepared to present the piece mid-way through the semester the piece will be presented to the theatre faculty. If sufficient preparation isn't demonstrated, the student director will not be allowed to present the project at the end of the semester.
- Work with faculty designer/technical director regarding the requirements of the presentation; cooperate with other seniors who will be presenting on the same evening or week.
- Shoot all scenes and record all sound called for in the script. On-set rewrites will not be permitted..

Screen dailies for faculty advisor. All crew heads of department must be present for screening.

### **Producing Post-Production Phase**

- Working with post team, producer must create and supervise post-production schedule.
- Producer must be present to review iterative cuts prior to picture lock when reviewed by faculty advisor.
- Producer must be present for final mix of sound for stereo and L/C/R playback
- Producer will sign off on program for their project. Department will print.
- Screen project on scheduled presentation date for the general public.
- Producer will collaborate with director to make and distribute copies of the film for all cast and crew and submit two DVD archive copies with production binder.

### **Film Directing Preparation Phase**

The student director must schedule regular meetings with his/her faculty advisor to ensure the project stays on track. The student and faculty advisor will agree upon deadlines for the completion of various phases. In preparation for the presentation of the piece, the student film director must compile the following information which will be presented in a binder at the end of the semester:

1. Concept statement
2. Script/Storyboard. Producer to secure rights to script via signed legal contract.

3. Technical requirements (use of lighting, costumes, set, and sound elements). Please remember that technical support is limited. As the director, you must decide how best to utilize what is available to you.

4. In collaboration with Producer, review budget.

5. Scout/Secure locations.

6. Hold auditions to cast the project.

7. In collaboration with producer, assemble production crew as needed.

8. Prepare visual reference book, overhead blocking plans, and script analysis/directing plan

9. In collaboration with Produce and AD, prepare a shooting schedule.

11. A journal detailing the creative process.

12. Any additional readings, assignments or activities as directed by your faculty advisor

### **Directing Production Phase**

- Schedule regular meetings with faculty advisor to ensure that the project stays on track. Your faculty advisor will request to attend selected production meetings.
- Run rehearsals according to production schedule.
- Be prepared to present the piece mid-way through the semester the piece will be presented to the theatre faculty. If sufficient preparation isn't demonstrated, the student director will not be allowed to present the project at the end of the quarter.
- Work with faculty designer/technical director regarding the requirements of the presentation; cooperate with other seniors who will be presenting on the same evening or week.
- Shoot production according to all requirements of the script. On-set rewrites will not be permitted.
- Screen dailies for faculty advisor. All crew heads of department must be present for screening.

### **Directing Post-Production Phase**

- Collaborate with editor to cut film to picture lock by agreed-upon scheduled date as specified in production schedule. Iterative cuts prior to picture lock will be reviewed by faculty advisor.
- Edit dialogue, SFX, atmospheres, and music/score to sync with picture-locked film.
- Mix sound for stereo and L/C/R pscybsck
- Student will prepare a program for their project. Department will print.
- Screen project on scheduled presentation date for the general public.
- Student will make and distribute copies of the film for all cast and crew and submit two DVD archive copies with production binder.

### **Feature Writing Research/Outline Phase**

- Student will prepare a logline, one page treatment, and an outline, along with any relevant research, to faculty advisor for approval before movie to draft stage.

### **Feature Writing Draft Phase**

Student will submit agreed-upon number of pages to faculty advisor on a weekly basis to ensure sufficient progress to complete the project by deadline.

### **Feature Writing Feedback Phase**

Student will schedule an open-to-the-public reading of the first act of the finished draft.

Faculty will respond to the finished draft with written notes.

### **Feature Writing Submission Phase**

Student will submit binder with first draft, all notes, and second draft addressing notes, and all relevant research as evidence of completing final project.

### **Below-the-Line, Head-of-Department x2 option**

Student will follow format similar to Director option, with submissions specific to their roles/responsibilities.