

***Student Handbook – Drama Studies Program***

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## PROGRAM AND COURSES

### MANDATE AND OVERVIEW OF THE DRAMA STUDIES PROGRAM

The Mount Allison University Drama Studies Program courses and activities in the Motyer-Fancy Theatre are designed as an interdisciplinary program that supports a truly liberal education rather than professional training for the theatre. We participate fully in Mount Allison's longstanding tradition in the fine and performing arts. From its earliest iteration in the mid-1970s until today, the program has been expressly not a conservatory training program, allowing it to play a broader and conscientiously vital role in the University's overall objectives to provide a liberal education. It does this by foregrounding integration across the campus as a whole and within its curriculum and activities.

The decision was taken not to pursue the idea of a conservatory training program at Mount Allison ("this function being better left to professional schools," citing one of the earliest Senate debates around approval of the first course for the Drama Studies Program in 1975), but to favour instead the development of a program explicitly devoted to the liberal education values of the University.

In keeping with tradition and policy, all courses and activities are accessible to students from across the University. The Drama Studies Program is truly interdisciplinary, contributing to 'the education of the whole person,' situated as it is at the interface of curricular and extracurricular life. Students' involvement with the interdisciplinary program in Drama may evolve through the formal routes of the Major or Minor in Drama, or it may take the form of co-curricular or extracurricular activities in support of Drama Studies Program productions in the University's brand-new multi-functional Motyer-Fancy Theatre.

The intersection, so intrinsic to the nature of the discipline of Drama Studies as a whole, of multifaceted academic study (literary, theoretical, cultural, etc.) with fundamental practices of acting, production, and design, makes drama studies "the essential liberal art" (Thomas H. Gressler, *Theatre as the Essential Liberal Art in the American University*. Vol. 16: Edwin Mellen, 2002). Drama Studies at Mount Allison in particular, with its explicit emphasis on liberal education, curricular balance among related sub-disciplines in drama, and its active integration into the larger campus life, is well positioned to meet the demands of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### HISTORY OF THE DRAMA STUDIES PROGRAM

Theatre performances and classroom study of dramatic literature were features of liberal education at Mount Allison University long before there was a Drama Studies Program. A dedicated performance space was created in the early 1970s when part of the former Memorial Library was converted into the Windsor Theatre. Drawing on and focussing this creative energy, the first Director of Drama, English-Department professor Dr. Arthur Motyer (appointed in 1975), spearheaded the creation of the Interdisciplinary Program in Drama Studies in the same year. From its beginning the program supported a balanced three-pronged approach to drama: theatre practice,

dramatic literature, and theatre studies (which examines the intersections of practice, theory, history and literature of drama). Over the years, a wide range of dramatic literature courses has been offered by the departments of English, Classics, French, and Spanish. Theatre Practice was offered in the earliest days through the English department course, Drama in the Theatre, which provided an “introduction to the principles of play production” and required participation in practical projects. Today our curriculum has grown into a stable of acting, production, design, and other studio courses. Finally, Drama Studies was the focus of the first specifically “drama” course created for the program in 1975: The Dramatic Principle. This was soon changed to a History of Drama course which was part of the program for many years. Today we offer several courses which foreground the theory and global social perspectives of drama studies.

While shifts in personnel and curriculum have come and gone, the dedication to a broad-based, liberal education in drama studies has remained constant. In 1993, with the retirement of Dr. Motyer, the directorship of the program was assumed by Dr. Mark Blagrove, also in the English Department. Six years later, Dr. Alex Fancy of the French Department became Director of Drama. A number of significant innovations to the program were established in this period which are hallmarks of our program today. With the support of the Crake Foundation, the Drama Studies Program has been able to engage theatre professionals on eight-month contracts as Drama Fellows. This program began with Hope McIntyre in 2001 and has included such theatre practitioners as Jenny Munday, Mary Vingoe, Linda Moore, and Samantha Wilson. In addition, the Crake Foundation supports a series of professional workshops, as well as the Graduate-in-Residence program, which allows us to invite a former drama student back to inspire current students regarding the variety of potential career paths after graduation.

In 2014, Mount Allison University opened the Purdy Crawford Centre for the Arts, a fully modern facility housing the Fine Arts Department and the Drama Studies Program. In the PCCA, we enjoy the benefit of the state-of-the-art multi-purpose Motyer-Fancy Theatre, as well as rehearsal space, costume and set storage, construction areas, office spaces, a classroom, and meeting rooms.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE DRAMA STUDIES PROGRAM

In response to our mandate as an interdisciplinary program in Drama Studies within the liberal education focus on Mount Allison University, our curriculum focuses on breadth, introducing students to as many areas of the discipline as our faculty and staff are qualified to teach. Our capstone independent theatre projects course (DRAM 4011 Advanced Theatrical Interpretation) allows students to gain a measure of advanced work in areas of interest, while our extensive theatre season means all students (both drama and non-drama) have ample opportunity to experience a wide range of skills: artistic, practical, academic, social, managerial, critical, and experimental. All dimensions of drama work are fully contextualized in the broader degree structure, which means students are not only exposed to at least one other field in some depth through their Minor subject, but also introduced to a multiple of complementary and distribution study areas.

Several broad objectives enact these approaches across our curriculum:

- to present a variety dramatic literatures, as well as the skills particular to the analysis and appreciation of dramatic literature as a theatrical medium;

- to introduce approaches to dramatic theory, techniques of criticism of dramatic literature and theatre performance, theatre studies, and the histories of theatre;
- to instill a vocabulary to discuss the aesthetic qualities of theatre production, structures, and cultural connections;
- to provide instruction in basic aspects of performance and production, stage direction and management, as well as in the basic requirements of theatre arts management and marketing;
- to provide opportunities to participate in productions that meet high aesthetic and technical standards
- to develop and educate audiences drawn from both the University community and beyond
- to teach technical theatre with the most current production equipment and facilities
- to provide opportunities for all students in the University who are interested in participating in dramatic activity.
- Finally, in consideration of our integration with the liberal education values of MtA, the following objectives are also relevant:
  - to develop broader written and oral communications skills
  - to develop flexible problem-solving skills in multiple contexts
  - to contextualize the study of drama within broader cultural and aesthetic phenomena
  - to develop life-long learning skills of intellectual enquiry, critical thinking, research, analysis, and synthesis
  - to develop skills related to team and collaborative work
  - to expand cultural horizons

## STRUCTURE OF THE DRAMA STUDIES PROGRAM

The Drama Studies Programs (Major and Minor) have relatively few entrance-level courses that serve as common gateway prerequisites to a large number of mid- and upper-year courses. This allows flexible movement of students across the various areas of drama studies to promote a more integrated approach to the whole discipline

The key prerequisite courses are DRAM 1701 Introduction to Drama Studies and DRAM 2151 Introduction to Acting, which most students take within their first 3 semesters. These are the most frequent prerequisites for other courses in the program. Upper-year courses may also require a certain number of credits at the 3000 level (eg. ENGL 3611 requires “3 credits from ENGL at the 2000 level or third-year standing in the Interdisciplinary Drama Program or permission of the Department”). This ensures students have a solid preparation for advanced study in addition to the basic drama prerequisite. Other than this initial sequencing (and some special situations such as the DRAM 4011 projects which require particular preparation), students are free to pursue their Drama

Major or Minor with relative freedom as to the order of courses. This allows students maximum opportunity not only to approach their drama studies in a flexible manner, but also to combine the drama programs (Major or Minor) with many different programs from across campus.

Moreover, this broad, integrated approach is built into the distribution of the curriculum courses across different sub-disciplines. Taken as whole, the Major offers a roughly balanced number of courses in three pillars of study: dramatic literature, theatre practice, and theatre studies.

- **Dramatic literature** courses, such as Development of Modern Drama, Modern Canadian Theatre, or Restoration and Eighteenth-century Drama, focus on the study of dramatic texts, where the literary values of the materials dominate the approach.
- **Theatre practice** courses, such as Introduction to Acting, Theatre Design, and Principles of Directing, focus on the production outcomes of theatre and are delivered in studio or the theatre itself.
- **Theatre studies** courses, the third pillar, such as Trends in Performance, Dramatic Theory, or Drama, Theatre, and Society, bridge the literary and studio approaches by investigating the larger social, cultural, political, and aesthetic issues of our field.

The three pillars are not silos. It is impossible to do valuable studio work, where the emphasis is on developing production skills in acting, design, directing, etc. without including foundational work with dramatic texts. Likewise, useful study of dramatic literature must take into consideration staging practices and performance histories. And of course theatre studies must address cultural or other issues through the lens of both text and practice. These branches each stress different aspects of the study of drama, but since students in our Drama Major are exposed to all three approaches in approximately equal measure, the result is broad integrated understandings of the field.

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## HOW TO PLAN YOUR COURSES

The Director of Drama is the official program advisor for the Drama Studies Program. If you are pursuing a Major or Minor in drama, you should be making an appointment with the Director of Drama every year to review your course choices.

In your first year, you will take DRAM 1701 Introduction to Drama Studies, and you may also take DRAM 2151 Introduction to Acting. In addition, you will normally be taking courses for your Minor subject and working on “Distribution Credits” (see Academic Calendar for more information).

In second year and beyond, once you have completed DRAM 1701 and 2151, you begin taking more Drama and drama lit (ENGL) courses as you complete any extra prerequisites and as the courses are offered. Many upper-level courses are offered every second year, so it is a very good idea to consult with the Director of Drama to plan your choices in advance.

Late in your second or third year, you will apply to do a 4011 project. Some students are able to do several of these in their final years, depending on the overall progress of their programs. You may also supplement your final years with independent studies courses (DRAM 4951) on academic topics you found intriguing in regular courses wish to pursue in more detail under the mentorship of a faculty mentor.

The University Academic Advisor can help you with larger issues of degree planning, GPA, application to graduate, etc.

E-mail: [advisor@mta.ca](mailto:advisor@mta.ca)

Phone: (506) 364-3200

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## 4011 COURSES

The capstone of the Drama Studies curriculum is our senior independent projects course, Advanced Theatrical Interpretation (DRAM 4011), in which students are mentored one-on-one with a faculty or staff member in order to engage with academically approved practical projects linked to the Motyer-Fancy Theatre season in order to exercise more advanced theoretical, artistic, and hands-on work in the theatre. Students choose their own objectives and their end goals in relation to what they have learnt in previous classes.

With help from their mentor, students comes up with a course plan that will map out their objectives for the project, learning outcomes, and course work needed to achieve them. Throughout the course, each mentor and student meet to talk about their challenges and to find solutions for them. The mentor acts not only as guide, but as resource for the students, as much chaperon as teacher through the process, while completing the practical and academic work associated with the project. In addition, all the 4011 students meet as a group every week where issues common to all are discussed and opportunities to learn how to discuss their artistic work are practiced.

The 4011s give students the opportunity to test out their ideas within an educational framework where experimentation and learning accrue more value than the final product. Past 4011 projects have included Lighting, Sound, Stage Management, Assistant Stage Management, Directing, Assistant Directing, and Costumes.

For current 4011 documentation, please refer to the Drama Studies website ([https://www.mta.ca/Community/Academics/Faculty\\_of\\_Arts/Drama/Courses/4011\\_courses/4011\\_courses/](https://www.mta.ca/Community/Academics/Faculty_of_Arts/Drama/Courses/4011_courses/4011_courses/)).

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## PRODUCTION PRACTICUMS (DRAM 2669, 3669, AND 4669)

Students do an enormous amount of work mounting our theatre season every year. They challenge themselves with new skills and fine-tune the basics of lighting, construction, design, painting, sound, stage-management, front-of-house, and so much more. To recognize this learning students can register for "Production Practicum" credits: Drama Majors are obligated to do these; others can use the credits as options in the Drama Minor or as electives in other programs. Be sure to check with your major or minor program that they will accept this 1-credit practicum as an option. It is your responsibility to ensure the credit will count towards your particular program/degree (if you are not a Drama major or minor).

To earn each Production Practicum credit, you simply do 60 hours of production work for Drama Studies theatre productions and get 1 credit. You do this three times (in 2<sup>nd</sup> year as 2669, in 3<sup>rd</sup> year as 3669, and in 4<sup>th</sup> year as 4669) for the equivalent of a regular 3-credit course. To ensure everyone's safety, students working in various shops and backstage areas will be required to demonstrate they know how to operate equipment safely. See Safety Guidelines elsewhere in this handbook.

The practicum requires 60 hours of backstage work for Drama Studies productions in the Motyer-Fancy Theatre. Notices of calls will be published in the weekly newsletter and posted on the callboard at the back of the theatre. You are responsible for maintaining a log sheet where crew chiefs will sign off on each crew you attend.

Students who perform a major role in a Drama Studies/Motyer-Fancy production can count 10 hours of that time towards that year's Production Practicum. Attendance at workshops is strongly encouraged and those hours also count towards these credits.

## ENRICHMENT

### CRAKE FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

The Crake Foundation, established by the late J.E.A. Crake, Josiah Wood Professor of Classics and Head of the Classics Department at Mount Allison from 1946 to 1976, has supported the Drama Studies program since 2001 by funding a number of initiatives which enhance and enrich the educational and artistic experience of students involved in Drama and Theatre at Mount Allison University.

#### J.E.A. Crake Drama Fellow

The Fellow is a theatre artist-scholar who teaches two 3-credit courses, usually directs a major production, and mentors a selection of independent studies students over each academic year. This position enhances and

enriches the educational and artistic experience of students involved in Drama at Mount Allison University, while contributing to the artistic work of the Drama program. This position can be renewed for a second year.

#### J.E.A. Crake Theatre Workshop Fund

This program supports the cost of workshops arranged to enhance the educational experience of students involved in the work of the Drama Studies Program and the Motyer-Fancy Theatre. The fund is intended to enrich opportunities for students involved in drama by inviting to campus theatre practitioners who will give workshops in their area of expertise. Workshops focused on a variety of performance or technical theatre topics are held each year.

#### J.E.A. Crake Drama Graduate in Residence

Each year, the Drama Studies program has the opportunity to invite a Mount Allison graduate who has made a significant contribution to the field of theatre to campus for a period of 3-4 days. The recipient usually gives a public presentation, visits classes, interacts with current drama students and provides workshops and/or presentations in their area of expertise. Notable Mount Allison Drama graduates who have participated in this program since its inception include Matthew Jocelyn, Kerr Wells, Ross Manson, Don Hannah, and Sarah Cardey.

#### J.E.A. Crake Performance Award in Drama

An award is made to a graduating student actor who, in the opinion of the members of the Drama Group, has made an outstanding contribution to the cultural life of the Mount Allison community. The Award is administered by the Director of Drama who calls for applications and convenes an Adjudication Committee of the staff and faculty members of the Drama Group. Applicants are assessed on the quality and variety of acting projects during their time at Mount Allison (in the University Theatre, Tintamarre, improv groups, Garnet and Gold, and others). Consideration is given to the number of performances, to academic achievement and to efforts made by the actor to practice his/her craft in the wider community.

## STUDENT TECHS

The Drama Studies Program employs four student technicians who help out with the day-to-day operations of the Motyer-Fancy Theatre. They basically work on an honorarium with limited hours during the year. At present the honorarium is paid based on 4 hours per week for 12 weeks each term for a total of 96 hours.

- Costume/Paint tech is responsible for helping maintain the costume shop and painting areas of the theatre as well as ensuring the Greenroom and dressing rooms are kept in an orderly fashion.

- Front-of-House tech is responsible for the crewing of the front of house during shows and the production of the show programs, season brochure, and posters. They are also responsible for keeping the small props room in order.
- General tech is responsible for maintaining the areas of lighting, sound, and carpentry shop. They are also responsible for keeping the theatre, large props, and set storage areas in order.
- Web/Marketing tech is responsible for the web page, newsletter, and social media. They help coordinate media releases as well. They ensure that the shows are recorded and are in charge of the production office. They help out the other techs in group projects.

If you're interested in any of these positions, contact the Production Manager (Paul Del Motte).

## TINTAMARRE

Alex Fancy, Mount Allison Alumnus and Professor Emeritus, founded Tintamarre, Mount Allison's French & English bilingual theatre company, in 1982. He remains actively involved in the writing, direction and production of this bilingual, community driven theatre to the present.

Each Tintamarre production begins with an idea which is developed by students working collaboratively with director/playwright Fancy over a period of three months of rehearsal. Students do not audition for roles; they become members of the cast by attending rehearsals. Cast sizes range from 10 to 20 students. Each student Tintamarrian participates in the development of the script, along with the creation of individual characters.

The collaborative process on campus concludes with four evenings of performances in the Motyer-Fancy Theatre. Then the process of creating a touring show begins. Fancy condenses the script from its usual 90 minutes to 54-55 minutes. After Mount Allison's classes end in the spring, the shortened form of the play is rehearsed for one full week by a leaner cast of 10-12 students. The show is then taken on the road to Elementary, Middle and High Schools in the Maritimes, with 20 or more performances over a two- or three-week period.

## STUDENT PRIZES

### **J.E.A Crake Performance Award in Drama**

The J.E.A. Crake Performance Award in Drama is awarded annually at Convocation to the graduating student who, in the opinion of the members of the Drama Studies Program, has demonstrated outstanding acting ability and

who has maintained high academic standing and contributed to the cultural life of the University community. Graduating students apply by letter addressed to the Director of Drama just after Reading Week in the winter.

### **Nathan Cohen Memorial Scholarship**

The Nathan Cohen Memorial Scholarship was established in 1974 in memory of Nathan Cohen, a distinguished graduate and drama critic who graduated in 1942 and received an honorary degree from Mount Allison in 1967. It is supported by contributions from family, friends, and the Toronto Star. The award is given to an outstanding student who has a keen interest in dramatic literature and has demonstrated interest in, and aptitude for, the practical aspects of play production. Graduating students may self-nominate or nominate others in late winter. In addition, the Drama Group will consider the pool of drama students for the scholarship.

### **Katherine (Shaw) Bigelow Memorial Prize**

The Katherine (Shaw) Bigelow Memorial Prize was established in 1962 by the family of Katherine (Shaw) Bigelow who graduated in 1942 and was active in the Players' Society during her four years at Mount Allison. The award recognizes a student who has made the most significant contribution to the year's productions as performer, director, technician, stage manager, or playwright. Students in first, second, or third year may self-nominate or nominate others in late winter. In addition, the Drama Group will consider the pool of drama students for the prize.

### **Beth Robinson Award**

The Beth Robinson Award was created in memory of a dedicated Mount Allison theatre supporter in 2003. The award recognizes ongoing contributions in the area of design and/or production in the Motyer-Fancy Theatre. It is normally awarded during the academic year, to a student who has been active in design and / or production in the Motyer-Fancy Theatre in the past, and who continues to contribute in either or both of these areas. Students in first, second, or third year may self-nominate or nominate others in late winter. In addition, the Drama Group will consider the pool of drama students for the award.

### **MASU Department/Program Award**

Each year the Mount Allison Student Union solicits nominations from each department and program to recognize a "deserving Drama Major or Minor graduating with a high academic performance (Minimum overall GPA = 3.0) and/or having contributed to your department in an extraordinary manner." The Drama Group will consider the pool of graduating drama students for the award.

Watch your newsletters in late January or early February for calls for nominations!

## COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE

### COMMUNICATIONS

With so much going on, it's important to check in with the various program communications tools every day:

**Drama Studies Program website** (<http://www.mta.ca/drama/>) is your gateway to information on all areas of the program and the Motyer-Fancy Theatre.

**Newsletter:** every Monday or Tuesday throughout the school year the Drama Studies Program produces an email newsletter with information about events, workshops, crew calls, field trips, academic deadlines, auditions, jobs, and so much more. If you have an announcement to include in the Newsletter, send your text to the student Web/Marketing Tech in the theatre production office by first-thing Monday morning every week.

**Theatre Callboard:** located in the hallway just outside the production office behind the theatre, the callboard hosts postings for all theatre events including auditions, cast-lists, crew-calls, as well as addition information on summer jobs, outside workshop, and other opportunities.

**Facebook:** The Drama Studies Student Society maintains a Facebook page where timely announcements are distributed. It is a closed group, so just contact one of the Student Society exec members and they will make sure you are added.

**Twitter:**@MotyerFancy

## GOVERNANCE

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### DRAMA GROUP

Throughout the academic year the drama group meets regularly to advise the Director of the Drama Studies Program on matters relating to the functioning of the Drama Studies Program and on matters relating to the functioning of the theatre spaces and season. The members of this group include all faculty and staff who teach DRAM courses, including the current Crake Fellow in Drama and any part-time stipendiary appointments, the Production Manager and Resident Designer, and other faculty at MtA who teach drama-related courses. As well, two student representatives are appointed, one from the Drama Studies Students Society representing students enrolled in a Drama Major or Minor program and one from the Drama Studies theatre community.

Students wishing to provide feedback or raise concerns should contact the president of the Drama Studies Society, who can bring your comments or questions to the next Drama Group meeting.

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### DRAMA STUDIES SOCIETY

The student society was created in 2011 with two purposes in mind. The first was to create formal liaison among the Drama Studies program, faculty, staff, and students. The aim of this is to provide students with a voice to give feedback and be part of decision making that concerns them and their education. This is achieved by having a representative from the DSS executive present at every Drama Studies Advisory Group (DSAG) meeting and by holding Annual General Meetings for students to offer feedback about the program. Out of the AGM, the DSS brings certain concerns to the DSAG for discussion and action.

The second objective was to have a representative body on the Mount Allison Campus that would help Drama students stay active and informed of all things theatre happening both on and off-campus. Whether Garnet and Gold, Tintamarre, The Vagina Monologues, Live Bait, the Motyer-Fancy Theatre, or other groups concerning performing arts, the DSS's purpose is to help promote events, auditions, casting calls, play readings, job opportunities, and more.

Aside from these two main goals, the DSS also contributes a sum of money every year to the MASU prize given to a Drama Studies student, organizes meet-and-greets for in-coming students, along with other events on and off campus.

Current Drama Studies Society executive includes a president, vice-president, treasurer, and social co-ordinator. DSS holds elections for these positions every spring and welcomes nominations from the student body.