

École Supérieure de Théâtre of the Université du Québec

by Josette Féral

Postgraduate degrees offered:

- MA in theatre
- PHD in “Études et pratique des arts”

MASTER IN THEATRE

Year the degree course was founded: 1979

It is accredited as a university degree since the beginning.

Professions the degree prepares students for: artists, critics, directors, actors, teachers, researchers

Profile and aims:

All profiles are accepted, theoreticians as well as practitioners. Students must have a BA in Drama or in teaching of Drama and an average of 3.2/4.3. If they don't have a BA, they can be admitted if they have a professional experience and a good knowledge of theatre.

Total number of current students: 59

Maximum number of admitted students per year: between 20 and 30

Maximum number of admitted students per degree: 30

Estimated number of graduate students per year: around 10

Admission requirements for regular students:

Bachelor degree.

Selection procedure:

On the basis of

- Academic results
- Project submitted

Portfolio (projet de recherche ou de création)

Others: Letters of recommendation

Sometimes an interview is required.

Evaluation criteria:



Academic results: 45%;
Letters of recommendation: 10%;
Pre-project: 45%.

70% of the students are admitted

Financial aspects

Registration fees: 705.34\$ (Canadian dollars) per term, 1500\$ per year (2 semesters)
Scholarships / grants: Very few grants from the University. Grants and loans are handled through the Governments (most students are entitled to loans free of interest as long as they are students). Some generous scholarships are given mainly through public structures : the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council , SSHRC, national) and the Fonds québécois de la recherche (FQRSC, provincial). The grants are given through independent appraisals committees.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Duration of the programme: 2 years (full time) / 4 years (part time)

Total number of credits: 45 credits (90 ECTS)

- Active learning: 1/3 (15 credits or 30 ECTS): attending lectures and seminars
- Passive learning: 2/3 (30 credits or 60 ECTS) for writing the ‘mémoire’ (essay off 150 pages) or a “creation”.

From the total, number of ECTS dedicated to:

Practice: it depends of the project of each student

Theory: 15 credits (45 ECTS) per course, 3 are required

Professional orientation (collaboration with a cultural or artistic institution): it depends on the project of every student. Normally, there are very few interaction with outside institutions.

Development of individual projects: 30 credits for each “mémoire” or “creation” (60 ECTS)

Subjects

There are many topics that are dealt with in the seminars: methodology, today’s theatre, theatricality, violence in todays’ texts, acting theories... Topics vary according to needs and to the persons responsible for the program.

List of courses:



Methodology of research and experimental creation.

Reading seminar.

Thematic seminar.

Studio production.

Thematic seminar II.

Studio production II.

Dialogue theory-praxis.

History of artistic tendencies in puppet theatre.

Detailed description of some courses:

Thematic seminar.

This seminar of changeable content allows for a reflection on issues related to actual theatre research. Following the students' needs and the lecturer's competencies it tackles generic or historical questions of dramaturgy and scene by focusing on a topic broad enough to give raise to a general or more precise interest in which to go in depth. It could also deal with performance theories, with the study of one author's pieces, with the junction between two art forms or with a non-western theatrical tradition.

Studio production.

The work in the studio has a changeable content which privileges the practical dimension of theatre. It can deal with performance, staging, movement, voice, scenography, writing or education. The lecturer can suggest to continue with the working process in a laboratory.

Dialogue theory-praxis.

This seminar is given by a team of two professors - an artist and a theoretician - and is aimed at scanning a special aspect of practice in connection with a theoretical field. For instance, it can deal with the question of space, of acting or foreign acting techniques. This seminar may be given also with a laboratory.

The theoretical seminars and the practical ones are given alternatively. Each seminar is followed by analysis, discussions, exercises, observations and experimentation.

Validation of other degrees: If a student asks not to take some courses because he has done them previously, the admission committee discusses the matter. Each request is analysed separately.

On the opposite, when students arrive without the required previous knowledge, they may be required (by the admission committee) to take a few complementary seminars (quite often theoretical) at the BA level. These courses become a prerequisite to their final admission at the MA level.



Frequency: 3h/week

Methodology: Seminar

Assessment and monitoring of the student

Tutorial support: 6 to 8 times during 2 years

Final exam: (see final work) either a ‘mémoire’ (essay) 150 pages long, or a ‘creation’, usually a performance on a specific topic.

Final project: part theoretical and practical

Formal requirements:

The ‘mémoire’ is either a traditional essay on a specific theoretical subject, or a performance or a ‘demonstration’ like a paper given at a conference. It can also be a play written for that purpose. In each instance, the work has to include a theoretical analysis which can go from 50 pages to 100 and which should explain what is intended in the practical work or which deals with a specific topic linked with the practical work (i.e. a specific aspect of acting, of lighting in the scenography, of costumes in a play...).

The practical work has to be different from an artistic work in so far as it has to be experimental and to explore an idea, a hypothesis, a definite topic. It should not be a full performance. Therefore it is adamant to well define the topic from the start in order to have a clear focus and be able to analyze the subject in depth.

Once accepted, the practical projects are submitted on specific forms which allow the committee to approve the planning, the team, the budget, and all technical aspects of the performance. This happens long before the student starts to rehearse or do workshops to explore his ideas. In order to actually create the intended work, the student get some financial subsidy (1000\$).

Accepted formats: performance, “demonstration”, intervention, plus theoretical analysis, reading of a play which has been written for the occasion.

Average number of final projects / dissertations per year: 10; Theoretical projects: 2.

Practical projects: 8

Public showing of the work: 4 times when it is practical. The students are allowed rehearsals in studios but they are given only a two weeks bracket in the theatre: one to get prepared and one for public presentations.

As for the theoretical essay (mémoire) it is only upraised by a jury. There are no public presentation. The theoretical presentation can be analytical, historical, sociological, etc. It can also be a ‘demonstration’ (kind of public lecture- 1h or 1:30) illustrated by



pictures, videos, recordings or actors. Sometimes it is a full play written for the purpose. No public presentation is needed in this last instance.

In all cases, there must be a theoretical part which can either reflect on the work of art or bring forward a specific aspect of the work (for instance a comparison between the actor's energy in the theatre and in movies applied to one scene in a chosen play).

Examining board: internal: 3 members including the director of the 'mémoire', eventually it can be somebody from outside the University.

Competencies obtained by the student on completion of the degree.

- Analytical skills

The MA aims first of all at giving the students a good analytical knowledge of existing practices and theories. It aims at showing all students – whether they are working in practice or theory – how each field interacts with the other and may be fed in return. It tries to help student understand the creative process from different angles : psychoanalytical, aesthetic, dramaturgically, on stage... They must know , by the end, how to analyse a performance, how to problematize a topic, how to structure ideas and how to come with a specific objective or demonstration. The seminars also bring them up to date with some trends of thought, present practices and ideas.

- Artistic skills

For those who work in acting or staging or who wants to write a play, the MA is meant to bring them to better understand the artistic challenges and aesthetic objectives which are present in any work of art, whether it is a performance or a written play.

It aims also at helping the students understand a specific aspect of their practical work: an aspect of acting (energy, presence, influence of lighting in interpreting a specific play, what happens for actors when they enter their performance space after having rehearsed in a different surrounding...), staging, movement, voice, scenography, writing of a play, devising a rehearsal method...

It brings them to experiment the space, feel it, explore its variables as well as explore the link between the different scenic elements, the meaning of the main vectors which can be read in the space, in the rhythm, in the bodies. It teaches them what is at stake when understanding a work, its intentions, its possible theatricalization.

Although the “creation” has to be small in size, the actual doing of the project brings the students to create a project and to organize a team of conceptors and actors. It brings them to work with other components than an actual dramatic text.



When they write a play, the MA helps them understand how to choose a particular angle to deal with the subject, and tries to stress originality as well as explore the dynamics of writing.

In certain instances it brings the student to become familiar with technology or the media, and to understand the link between the image and the actor.

- Communication skills

Students follow one methodology course and a reading course. These courses have two aims : help the students define better their subject and understand the projects brought forward by the other students in the group. Therefore it compels them to widen their perspective and interact with the other students. It creates a very interesting pool of ideas, exchanges, complicity which helps communication.

On the other hand, students have to give “exposés” , book summaries and present their work in the group regularly. So they learn not only how to structure their thoughts but also how to speak in public.

- General skills

The main strength of this program is to give the students an interdisciplinary reflection. It teaches them how to put theory and practice in a dialog, how to master methodological tools and theories. n et réflexion pluridisciplinaire. Faire interagir pratique et théorie. Maîtrise et production d’outils méthodologiques et technologiques de création et de recherche pluridisciplinaires.

- Research skills

They are taught how to do research using all the data bases. They are asked to read several books in their field, summarize them and have a synthetical point of view on specific topics. Some of them find the exercise very stressing since writing long essays is not part of their usual life.

- Pedagogical skills

An MA degree does not necessarily go with teaching pedagogy. Moreover there are no pedagogy classes at that level. However, the fact that students have very often to talk in public, to structure and convey their ideas help their pedagogical skills. They learn how to be articulated, clear and simple in order to convey main ideas.

- General skills

Cover the field of today’s practice, be able to situate their own research within today’s history of ideas.

PHD IN ‘ÉTUDES ET PRATIQUE DES ARTS’

The PHD program is an interdisciplinary program bringing together several departments: theatre, dance, music, visual arts, history of arts.



Year the degree course was founded: 1997

It is accredited as a university degree since the beginning.

Professions the degree prepares students for: Artists, critics, directors, actors, teachers, researchers.

Aims: The aims is to give the practitioners a theoretical background and let some artists as well as theoreticians try new things.

Student's profile: All profiles are accepted (theoreticians as well as practitioners)

Total number of current students: 100

Maximum number of admitted students per degree: 20

Estimated number of graduate students per year: 5

Estimated number of PhD students per year: 20

Admission requirements for regular students:

Usually a Master's degree in Arts, although it is not necessary. Some students have no former degree but they have proofs of their work as artists.

Selection procedure:

Portfolio

Project proposal of 5 pages.

CV and documentation about previous experience.

Evaluation criteria:

The selection is made after due analysis of their academic results, their professional experience, the letters of reference sent and of the files they can show on their previous artistic work.

Financial aspects

Registration fees: 720.00 Canadian dollars for a term, almost 1500 for the year.

Scholarships / grants: Very few grants from the University. Grants and loans are handled through the Governments (most students are entitled to loans free of interest as long as they are students). Some generous scholarships are given mainly through public structures: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, SSHRC, (national) and the Fonds Québécois de la Recherche (FQRSC, provincial). The grants are given through independent appraisals committees.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Duration of the programme: officially 4 years but quite often it lasts 6

Total number of credits: 90 credits (180 ECTS)

- Active learning: 1/3 (30 credits or 60 ECTS): seminars and workshops



Passive learning: 2/3 (60 credits or 120 ECTS): writing the “dissertation” or preparing the “performance” or “work of art”

Credit distribution:

60 Credits (120 ECTS) for the dissertation

12 credits (24 ECTS) for the exam

6 credits (12 ECTS) 2 courses in practice or theory (free choice)

12 credits (24 ECTS) 4 compulsory courses, namely 2 in methodology

Learning methodology

- Seminars: 12 credits (24 ECTS)
- Workshop: 6 credits (12 ECTS)
- Written and oral exam: 12 credits (24 ECTS)
- Dissertation and/or creation: 60 credits (120 ECTS)

From the total, number of ECTS dedicated to:

- Practice: 50%
- Theory: 50%
- Professional orientation: it depends on the project of every student but most students do their own project without any link to artistic or cultural institution. They are allowed however to present their work in professional venues.

Development of individual projects: 60 credits for the dissertation (120 ECTS)

List of courses:

Research and production seminar: methodology I

Research and production seminar: methodology II

Thematic seminar I: Arts: Conception, realisation, performance

Thematic seminar II: Arts: texts and writing

Thematic seminar III: Arts: cultures and societies

Studio production I

Studio production II

Project exam

Final work (Dissertation, production, intervention)

Validation of other degrees: Maximum number of validated: 6 credits (12 ECTS); one course can be waived after due analysis by the graduate Committee and the chair of the program.

Assessment and monitoring of the student



Tutorial support with variable frequency (from once a month to once every three months)

- Mid exam (called ‘project exam’) to assess whether the student is ready to undergo the writing of the dissertation or the practical work.
- Students’ reports about their work on a regular basis, depending on the PHD advisor. At least twice a semester in seminars.

Final work.

There are three kinds of dissertation: production work (thèse création), intervention work (thèse intervention) and research thesis (thèse recherche).

- Research thesis: It consists in the writing of a dissertation documenting research and its findings. It should be new and unpublished and constitute an original contribution to the knowledge progress in the field of art research and studies. The written thesis should be at least 250 pages long.
- Production work: it consists in the writing of a dissertation and the production of a work (performance, choreography; but also works in visual arts, media arts). The text should be at least 150 pages long and comprise an analytical or critical reflection on the issues raised by the practical work. The production work should constitute an original and new contribution to the field of artistic praxis or propose a new way to consider already existing artistic issues.
- Intervention work: It consists in the writing of a dissertation and the realization of a project or praxis related to a social space and to cultural facts in different artistic fields (animation, diffusion, education, therapy, etc.)

Public showing of the work is compulsory

Most projects are practical, but all of the practical work (“creations”) have a link with a “theoretical project” and come with a long written essay. The practical work is always linked with a main hypothesis or theoretical idea as well as aesthetical considerations. Here are a few examples of projects done in the last few years:

- “Recherche de moyens d’intervention pour contrer la violence dans les processus photographiques” Jean Cédras, 2002
- “Sensation of presence through shape and surface in art work of two or three dimensions : how to conjure movement between states of consciousness” Janice Flood Turner, 2003
- “Décrire le paysage: poésie et relation esthétique ou comment attraper l’eau des nuages” Dominique Valade, 2003



- “Monument du vide, découvrir l’*âtre* cybernétique” Marie-Christiane Mathieu, 2004
- “L’art de monter. Approche phénoménologique de la pratique du montage dans une étude de cas en documentaire” Louise Surprenant , 2006
- “Paysages sous la peau : la dynamique du métissage comme approche du corps pluriel scénique” Geneviève Martin, 2007
- “Étude phénoménologique de l’état d’authenticité dans l’acte d’interprétation en danse contemporaine” Diane Leduc, 2007

The dissertation topic is submitted to the admission committee and accepted or not depending on the fields of research, the program and University resources to help accomplish such a project. The candidate may be called for an interview in front of the admission committee.

Evaluation:

Production or intervention work: 50% of the evaluation relies on the work and its diffusion; 50% on the reflection text.

Research Thesis: a minimum of 75% of the evaluation relies on the text, while a maximum of 25% on the diffusion. It depends on the nature of the project.

Examining board:

It is constituted by 4 or 5 members who are (3 internal and 2 external members):

- advisor and co-advisor
- 2 examiners at least who come from outside the University
- at least one professor of the program
- a representative of the Dean.

Financing

Student: government financing only SSHRC, FQRSC

CREPUQ, for those who do doctorates in link with French Universities

Competencies obtained by the student on completion of the degree:

The acquired competencies depend on each project and each field of study.

- Technical skills

When students arrive, they are supposed to be already technically competent. During their studies, they can develop that competence by themselves but the PHD program do not try to expand on the practical aspects. It rather stresses the theoretical aspects and the interdisciplinarity part of the different fields interacting in the seminars.

- Artistic skills



On the artistic level, the students arrive well aware of the art world and are very often professionals, so the know-how of their discipline is very often part of their knowledge. The PhD tries to develop their reflection and the theoretical aspect of their work. It stresses the links between theory and practice and highlights how one feeds on the other.

- Theoretical knowledge

This is the most important aspect of the teaching. The seminars aim at giving the widest span of models, readings and theories that may exist in order for the students to pick up what is best for the kind of research they want to do. Finding a methodology or theoretical tools to help them come to grasp with their subject is always the hardest thing for the students to do. And up to now, in spite of many years of experimentation and of methodology courses, I am not sure we have found the right solution.

- Communication skills

Methodology courses that I have mentioned in the paragraph above have two aims : help the student define better his subject and understand the projects brought forward by the other students in the group. Therefore it compels them to widen their perspective and interact with the other students who become like a team. It creates a very interesting pool of ideas, exchanges, complicity which helps communication.

On the other hand, students have to give papers, present their work in the group regularly. So they learn not only how to structure their thoughts but also how to speak in public. Moreover they are encouraged to talk at conferences and the program may even give them some small stipend to help them travel.

- Pedagogical skills

A PhD degree does not necessarily go with teaching pedagogy. Moreover there are no pedagogy classes at that level. However, the fact that students have very often to talk in public, to structure and convey their ideas help their pedagogical skills. The PhD seminars also bring them up to date with some trends of thought, present practices and ideas.

- General skills

The main strength of this program is to give the students an interdisciplinary reflection. It teaches them how to put theory and practice in a dialog, how to master methodological tools and theories.

TEACHING STAFF

Master programme:

Required academic or professional qualifications: PhD for theory classes; MA for practical courses or a well established experience.



Other requirements: to have done some previous teaching and know the field, of course.

Percentage of teaching staff:

Tenured staff: 12

Non-tenured staff: 2

Guest lecturers: in case of need

Visiting professors: in case of need

Percentage in credits assignment:

Tenured staff. 75%

Non-tenured staff. 25%

Departmental structure

Teaching areas within theatre department:

- Scenography (light, costume and decor)
- Theory of theatre: dramaturgy and criticism
- Stage directing
- Acting
- Writing

PhD programme:

Required professional qualifications: experience as an artist + teaching experience + publications (eventually)

Required academic qualifications : PhD for theoreticians, professional experience + MA for artists

Teaching staff:

Tenured staff. ca. 6

Departments with the number of teachers in each:

The PHD program is an interdisciplinary program depending on other departments: theatre, dance, music, visual arts, history of arts. It can draw professors in philosophy, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, etc. It has no set number of professors.

Theatre: 15 out of which 4 teach occasionally at the PhD level.

Dance: 13 out of which 2 teach occasionally at the PhD level.

Music: 20 out of which 3 teach occasionally at the PhD level.

Visual arts : 33 out of which 3 teach occasionally at the PhD level.



History of arts : 27 out of which 3 teach occasionally at the PhD level.

As well as some professors from sociology, philosophy, linguistics, literature.

Research groups:

There are several research groups but very few PhD students are regular members .
Here are examples of some existing research groups.

- “Effets de présence et performativité” , Josette Féral, 3 PhD student within the group.
- “ Virtual characters in media arts”, Louise Poissant, 3 PhD students involved

Departmental financing

Official funding: 100%. The University is subsidized by Quebec Government according to the number of students and according to the number of students who graduate.

Research groups linked to postgraduate programmes

- “Effets de présence et performativité”, Josette Féral, 3 MA students
- Puppets, Marthe Adam, 2 students
- Costumes, Véronique Borboen, 2 students
- Movements dictionary, Francine Alepin, 2 students

Collaboration with other Universities: France, Brasil, Belgium, United-Kingdom, USA.

CONTEXT

ACADEMIC NETWORK

Exchanges: There are many exchanges with France and francophone universities but they are very often informal. The main exchange system is through CREPUQ. It allows the students not to pay tuition fees or to pay the same amount as Canadian rather than as foreigners (the fees are triple then).

EXTERNAL NETWORKS

Links to professional contexts: No formal agreement although some students may do it on their own. However many of our students at the MA level come from the artistic world itself.



Types of work experience: technicians, stage assistant or dramaturge, critic, in charge of communications for a festival, actors, responsible of their own company, etc.

INFRASTRUCTURES

Rooms for theory classes, several laboratories, audiovisual studios, CIAM (centre interuniversitaire des arts médiatiques, library, Video centre and archive centre, regular pool of university, several theatres: Alfred Laliberté (481 places max), Marie Gérin-Lajoie (730 places max), Claude Gauvreau (82 places max) which do not belong only to the theatre department, but also used by the rest of the University.

Only the theatres are shared with other degree courses.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Questionnaires to monitor student satisfaction for each course circulate at the end of the semester. That's common practice and the results are handed anonymously to the professor. Starting this year, the questionnaire will be online.

