Spring Quarter 2020 Questions and Answers

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all instruction for spring quarter 2020 has moved online. This presents challenges and opportunities that we, as individuals and as the Drama community, have never encountered before.

The purpose of this page is to provide information specific to the UW School of Drama and how we are managing our curricular and production activities during this time. This page will be updated frequently as new information becomes available. This page will be primarily populated with answers to questions posed by Drama students. If you have a question you would like answered and you are not sure who the best person is to ask, or would like your question to remain anonymous, please click the button below to submit your question.

Submit a Question

If you are looking for information about how the university is responding to the crisis, please check this page: Facts and information regarding spring quarter 2020.

- Academic Questions
- Production Questions
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Academic Questions

Q. What is the absence/sickness policy in Zoom format? How will the school handle absences needed for caregiving? (4.10.20)

A. These policies are determined on a class-by-class basis. However, in light of the current situation, the university has asked instructors to offer students maximum flexibility in terms of illness and caregiving accommodations. Additionally, because we now have students studying from many different timezones, faculty have been asked to make their coursework asynchronous to whatever extent possible, so that students may participate in class when they are able. For more detailed information about the university's guidance to instructors, please check https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/#faculty.

Q. Will grading be converted to CR/NC for many classes as it was for winter 2020? (4.10.20)

A. "The conversion of many courses to CR/NC grading in winter 2020 was driven by emergent circumstances. Instructors for spring 2020 have the opportunity to conceptualize and deliver their courses in full. Depending on the nature of the course content and the impacts of online delivery, some faculty may opt to use CR/NC, while others will remain with numeric grades. We expect the majority of classes will use numeric grades. If you are uncertain how a certain class will be graded this spring quarter, please contact the instructor of record. Your UW transcript will be annotated to note the possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on grading." [Source: https://www.washington.edu/provost/springquarter/?utm_source=uwhp&utm_medium=tiles&utm_campaign=coronavirus-spring-quarter#academics]

Q. How will BA auditions for fall quarter MFA-level acting classes (which would normally happen during spring quarter) be handled this year? (4.10.20)

A. We don't have an answer for this question yet. This page will be updated with more information on this question soon. Please check back.
Production Questions

Q. How does COVID-19 impact the season planning process? (4.10.20)
A. The COVID-19 epidemic impacts our season planning process enormously. At the moment, Washington state is under a Stay Home Stay Healthy order. This order is in effect through at least May 4, 2020. Under this order, Washingtonians are allowed to leave their homes only for essential activities, like getting food or medicine, or for going to work at an essential business. At the University of Washington, all employees have been instructed to work from home unless they are officially sanctioned to be on campus. Under these conditions, live theatre in its traditional form—a lot of people gathered together in a room—is not possible.

We have no way of knowing how long this order will last, or what any relaxation of the order will look like. There is, of course, a chance that will be able to start up again in September as usual. But there is also a chance that we will not be able to hold in-person shows until the winter or spring of next year. We just don’t know, and we probably won’t know for some time.

At the moment, our season planning process for next season is effectively paused. This means that we are taking a step back from considering specific titles in order to think carefully about how to structure a season when we have no way of knowing when our ability to host the public in our buildings will resume.

Our absolute first priority is maximizing student experience and preserving educational benefits. Our goal is to use the next several weeks to get a handle on how we might plan a season that embraces this unprecedented situation by allowing for multiple contingency plans. One possibility might be to present a reduced season that starts later in the year. Another could be to program a season that can happen entirely online or via audio, but that also holds the possibility of pivoting to live performance when and if it is safe to do so. In every scenario, our mission to serve all of our students, across all of our programs, remains the same.

We realize this is a confusing time, and it would be great to have clear answers. You might be noticing that some regional theatres have already announced their upcoming seasons, which they anticipate starting on time in September in the traditional manner. Every organization has to handle their communications around this issue in the way that they feel is best for them. Here in the School of Drama, our first priority is our students. We feel it is incumbent upon us to give you the most honest assessment that we can of our current situation, even if that means saying “we don’t know” for longer than our colleagues in the professional theatre world are comfortable saying it.

We know that what happens with the season impacts everyone—students, faculty, and staff—enormously. What we can say right now is that work is happening, and we will communicate as much as we can as soon as we can.

Q. How will production assignments and auditions that would typically happen during spring quarter for the upcoming fall be handled this year? (4.10.20)
A. The answer to this question is contingent on a plan for fall quarter’s productions being in place. In other words, we don’t know yet. Information about fall quarter auditions and production assignments will be included when we are able to announce our fall production plan.

Other Questions

Q. What is the plan for graduation? (4.10.20)
A. The School of Drama traditionally hosts its own graduation ceremony, separate from the UW’s Commencement Ceremony. On April 8th, UW announced that, for the first time in its 159-year history, it would hold its 2020 commencement ceremony online, and inviting 2020 graduates to participate in the 2021 ceremony. The School of Drama’s 2020 graduation ceremony will likewise not be a live event this year.

We are forming a committee of students to help imagine what a meaningful ceremony could look like for this year’s graduating class. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, please contact Holly Arsenault at hollypla@uw.edu.

Q. Is there any financial assistance available for students who have been impacted by COVID-19? (4.10.20)
A. Yes. The UW has an emergency aid fund that is available to all current enrolled students. Click here to access the emergency aid application form. The Husky Food Pantry also remains open, and no one with a Husky ID will be turned away. Please note that, due to COVID-19, the pantry is no longer offering in-pantry shopping. All customers must fill out an online order form. Visit the Husky Food Pantry website for more information.

Q. Can I access Hutchinson Hall? (4.10.20)
A. Per university policy, Hutchinson Hall, our theatres, and our scene shop are closed to all except essential personnel. Essential personnel can include instructors who need to access buildings in order to support curricular activities. All essential personnel must have a letter designating them as such, and they must carry that letter when on campus. If you are a student, staff member, or faculty member who has not been designated essential personnel, and you feel that you must access one of our buildings for an essential purpose, please contact your program head or supervisor to make arrangements. If you do not know who to contact, please email uwdrama@uw.edu and your request will be routed to the appropriate person.

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