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
- Other Questions

Academic Questions

Q. Where can I find faculty teaching and office hours schedules? (4.27.20)
A. You can find Spring Quarter 2020 teaching and office hours schedules, as well as faculty contact information, right here: https://drama.washington.edu/spring-quarter-2020-teaching-schedules

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.”


Q. How will BA auditions for fall quarter MFA-level acting classes (which would normally happen during spring quarter) be handled this year? (4.29.20)

A. Rising junior and senior Drama, Dance, and Music majors can apply for a limited number of spaces in the following PATP (Professional Actor Training Program/MFA Acting) classes:

- Voice with Bridget Connors
- Integrative Alexander Technique with Cathy Madden

Eligible students have been sent a link to a Google form containing the application. Please contact Eloise Boyle at emboyle@uw.edu if you believe you are eligible and have not received the form.

Q. With summer A-term going online, is there any information available on how this will impact Drama 455? Will the class still be held at night? Will the material covered in the class be similar to if it were in person? (4.13.20)

A. Yes, the plan is to offer Drama 455 in the evening in Term A. I have taught Integrative Alexander Technique online for many years. And, am getting a lot of time online of course during this term. The class format will necessarily be different, the content will be the same. [Source: Cathy Madden]

Production Questions

Q. How does COVID-19 impact the season planning process? What is the plan for next season? (5.4.20)

A. Thank you all for your patience as we've worked to reconfigure plans for next season in response to the pandemic.

Despite the circumstances, our primary goals remain unchanged: to ensure student production opportunities and to maximize learning within whatever constraints we are working. We think the best way to ensure this is to approach next season with a plan that is flexible and responsive. We want to be able to adjust as seamlessly as possible to whatever social distancing measures are, or are not, in place at any given time as we navigate through the coming months and into next year.

It's important to acknowledge the important, diligent, serious work that was done by the season selection committee up to the point where we could no longer meet. Making season selection an open process that involves representatives from the entire school community is a really big shift for the school, and the members of the committee this year have proven that it can be valuable. Even though the state of the world means that a lot of the work the committee has done is no longer applicable to next season, the work of showing that a collective process can work—which is maybe the most important part—remains. We are keeping track of all the plays that have been discussed, and we will be better prepared for future planning as a result of this work.

None of us is in control of the pandemic and none of us can predict with any certainty how the coming months will unfold, except that we assume that the further ahead we look in the calendar, the more we can expect things to be improving. In other words, we think social distancing requirements could be less extreme six months from now, and even less extreme six months after that.

This has been a guiding principle we've used in approaching a plan for next season. In general, we think the shows planned later in the season have a greater likelihood of happening in physical space than those at the beginning of the year. This is why there are more shows than usual planned for spring quarter. We've been working with the notion of a spectrum that ranges from virtual space at one end to physical space at the other. In other words, from a state of extreme social distancing as we're experiencing now, to the kinds of interactive opportunities we had before the pandemic. While we can't predict where on this spectrum we're likely to be at any given
time, we intend to maximize the quality of student opportunities at every point along the way, within the constraints of safety, the law, and our financial and human capacity.

What are the specific challenges that have been considered regarding next season?

1) Our limited ability to plan for outcomes when what we’re planning for keeps changing (aka, planning a season on quicksand)
2) How to generate income when we may not be able to sell tickets
3) How to limit expenses in a time when income is likely to be severely reduced; for example, some productions may need to have reduced shop support and less design in order to provide enough performance opportunities
4) How to navigate performance rights (which typically do not cover the right to present a filmed or streamed version of a play); doing plays that are devised, in the public domain, or original provides more flexibility than producing published scripts
5) How to respond to changing social distancing protocols; for example, we may be able to gather to rehearse before we are able to have audience
6) If we can perform to an audience, how to ensure audience safety and comfort; how to gauge what will make audience members feel safe to attend a public event
7) The limits of our capacity as a school and of our staff to make multiple contingency plans and to respond swiftly to changing social distancing protocols

What are the projects currently under consideration for next season?

As of May 4, 2020, here is a rough plan for next season. This list includes shop-supported shows only—it does not include lab projects, “218s,” etc., but those are also being planned through a separate, faculty-led process.

PLEASE NOTE that this is not finalized. Please read this section for more information on when and how the season will be finalized.

Autumn:
1) A devised piece with the PATP directed by Libby King (new acting faculty member)

Autumn or Winter:
2) A play to be determined with BAs with director to be determined

Winter:
3) A devised/adapted radio-like play with full PATP cohort, directed by Jeffrey Fracé

Spring:
5) Kristie Post Wallace's Directing Thesis (title to be determined) with PATP
6) Andrew Coopman’s Directing Thesis (Rosmersholm) with PATP
7) A play to be determined with BAs directed by Valerie Curtis-Newton

NOTES:
• The season will also include design theses for several MFA design students. Because those projects have not yet been assigned, they are not noted here.
• The season will also include 1st year MFA directing projects (commonly known as “one-acts”). It is not yet known when those projects will happen, or at what level of shop support.

Why are there three shows in spring?
We believe that spring quarter has the greatest possibility (not a guarantee, but the greatest possibility) of being “normal.” In other words, in-person performances, either with or without audience. In order to maximize student opportunities, we are concentrating more shows into spring quarter than we typically would.

When will the season be finalized?
In a typical year, we would announce the full season in mid- to late-May. This year, we will be communicating with the public a little bit differently about our season. We plan to announce fall quarter programming by the end of May, with a rough outline of the remainder of the season. We will then announce winter quarter programming during in early November, and spring quarter programming in early February. This will allow us to be as responsive as possible to changing global conditions. At the same time, we recognize that students need to plan further ahead than audiences. Because of this, we will continue to provide internal updates like this one to students as things evolve/are known.

Additionally, we plan to set specific dates as ‘signposts’ where we are committed to the plan that’s in place on that date, regardless of how social distancing measures change between that date and the performances (for example, if we decide to do a show online, and that show’s ‘signpost’ date has passed, and then social distance restrictions are eased, the show will remain online).

How was the season selection committee formed?
The season selection committee is a volunteer committee comprised of students, faculty, and staff. Invitations to join the season selection committee went out to all students, faculty, and staff during fall quarter via email and in-person announcements (like at the All School Meeting). Anyone who wished to be involved was welcome, as long as they were able to commit to participating in an ongoing way. This year’s season selection committee includes three staff members, four undergraduate students, four graduate students, and five faculty members.

Can I be involved in season selection? Why am I not getting invites to season selection committee meetings?
Any member of the Drama community who wants to can be involved in season selection by volunteering to join the season selection committee, and committing to participate in the work of the committee, which includes attending meetings and engaging in conversation with the whole group, understanding pedagogical goals and production constraints and opportunities, and reading and sharing thoughts on plays suggested by members of the committee. Because this is a committee that requires a long-term commitment and an in-depth understanding of the season selection process, invitations to committee meetings do not go out to the entire school, just to members of the committee. If you would like to join the current season selection committee, please email Geoff Korf at gkorf@uw.edu and ask to be added to the season selection committee listserv. Invitations to join the 2021-2022 season selection committee will go out in fall 2020 or before.

I have a question, comment, or idea about the season. How can I communicate it?
You can either email your question or comment to Geoff Korf (gkorf@uw.edu) and/or Ryan Gastelum (gastelum@uw.edu) or you can use this form to submit your question or comment. The form will provide the option of submitting your question or comment anonymously.

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 the fall production plan is finalized.
Other Questions

Q. What is the plan for graduation? (4.29.20)

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.

The School of Drama's 2020 graduation ceremony will be held, in a virtual format, on Thursday, June 11th. The ceremony is currently being planned by a committee of faculty, staff, and students. Graduates will be receiving information from undergraduate advisor Eloise Boyle with details about how to participate in graduation. If you are a current undergraduate and you would like to nominate a community or faculty speaker for the ceremony, please use this form to submit your nomination(s).

2020 graduates will also be invited to participate in the School of Drama's 2021 graduation ceremony.

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 can 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.

School of Drama
University of Washington
101 Hutchinson Hall, Box 353950
Seattle, WA 98195-3950

Phone: (206) 543-5140
Fax: (206) 543-8512
Email: uwdrama@uw.edu

Source URL: https://drama.washington.edu/spring-quarter-2020-questions-and-answers