



Theatre Arts and Performance Studies

MFA PLAYWRITING

HANDBOOK

This document supersedes previous TAPS MFA Playwriting Handbooks

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This handbook is addressed to current and prospective MFA students to be used as a planning guide and reference resource throughout a student’s academic career. Pertinent University web resources should be regarded as the primary references for degree requirements and options. It is intended to complement the Graduate School Handbook and students should consult the Graduate School Handbook on university-wide policies on matters such as funding, leaves of absence, etc.

Further inquiries regarding the **MFA in Playwriting** should be addressed to Lisa D’Amour, Interim Head of Playwriting, Box 1897, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912; email: lisa_damour@brown.edu. Inquiries regarding the **Brown/Trinity MFAs in Acting or Directing** should be addressed to Jill Jann, MFA Program Administrator, Trinity Repertory Company, 201 Washington Street, Providence, RI 02903; email: Jill_Jann@brown.edu or see www.browntrinity.com

1. The MFA Playwriting Program Introduction

Our MFA in playwriting is a three-year program. We are looking for students who are committed to: the athletic development of their craft; the deep interrogation of the forms and purposes of their art, and of the place of art in the larger world; a leaning into faithful transformation of society through theatrical action.

Students take a strong hand in designing their own course of study; they are given opportunities to learn and opportunities to teach as well (the process of constructing and executing syllabi is so useful to the articulation of mission). Candidates for graduation submit a text of their choosing representing the most thorough exercise of their guiding experiments. This text may be a play or it may take some other shape. It is referred to here as a thesis and it is submitted in May of their final year. These are stored in Brown's library system, digitally. Along the way to the final year there are multiple opportunities for workshop and presentation.

Brown is a chief and storied site for the formation of playwrights, established to grant broad inventive license while offering close mentorship and profound resources (in the Department, the University, and the greater community, locally to internationally). Alumni distinguish themselves by their professional credits, and by their collegial élan. Brown's resources are deep—gorgeous stores of intellectual and artistic capacity, a deep history, a will to innovate and collaborate, outstanding libraries, a substantial array of interdisciplinary opportunities, and students who are rightly and well authorized to formulate and execute their own experiments.

This is a promising hour for the arts, and writing in particular. There are new, global drives to form social groups that center on ideals (this, at the heart of performance). After years of innovation in media technology, there is a sharp hunger for immediacy (again, at the heart of live performance). There is a reordering of public space, physically and virtually. After decades of important skepticism there is a new search for ways of making meaning (and the words are expression and capture of comprehension).

We aim to afford an environment in which the student's signal, personal voice can be explored on its own merits, and freely offered in an atmosphere of critical trust and exchange. Peace is the permission to be, to be in the moment. Drama, as the social moment, is learned through the establishment of a moment's peace assured through the granting of meaningful permissions.

Art, particularly performance, maintains that the live moment is collective, and bears history forward. In every creative act, the question is: how may this be held in common? Theater grounds itself in the avowal that our reality is social, and that our excellence achieves its quality in the give-away.

Our curriculum is:

Civic
Chaotic
Strange
Queer

Here are some of the many ways we might think of these words. You may offer others:

Civic

Globalized is to global what leatherette is to leather. There is a community that forms opportunistically, when individual countries don't want to avoid acknowledging something they've done, or when they want to divide the spoils of belated virtue (credit for something they haven't).

To gather our strength, theatrical strength, we need distinctive local behavior that can be moved without displacing it or making a copy of it. Rather than simply "international" with its absolving sense of no-place in patriarchal suspense: we want graduate students who are civic, urban (in the sense of ecological); students who see their actions linked through chaos to worldwide principles; anarchists who recognize that anarchy, and chaos, and a forest are highly organized. Work is not objective, privileged, isolated or immortal; it is not personal, held apart, or inviolably bordered. It moves. It navigates landscapes without conquering them.

Chaotic

Just as we're post national, we're also post disciplinary. This was once understood to be post dramatic, in the sense of post authorship/post-text. But the total loss of disciplines, like the total loss of self, is disastrous. The world we are trying to describe now is so richly detailed and complex that it must be viewed from all angles at once.

We study and work in chaos: networks infinitely deep, beyond completion or full mastery.

Strange

The language of experiment in physics has for a long time now taken up the fuzzy, hairy, strange and tangled. Art likewise must pursue strangeness. The chief strangeness that we can inflict, the balance to the pace and breadth of the world (the world we must take part in), is stillness and silence. Our impractical process slows things down, so that time is an imitation of eternity, of beautiful nothing.

Queer

Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Ignatius Loyola took architectural, geographic, and military patterns inward, creating spiritual schema on the basis of observed structures. This is the shift we face: network is the manifest pattern; we

must spiritualize it and then make the internal a public and hospitable space. Spirituality is the set of values by which one shares/distributes.

Queer can mean: A personal and demonstrated identity in contravention of logic or domination. Art must queer the system. Even critiquing the systematic self— at core—as with mystical thinking: we are ourselves and shared selves, selves for others at the same time.

2. The Writing for Performance in the Broader Department and University

MFA students in Playwriting can easily find opportunities to work collaboratively among scholars, actors, directors, playwrights, designers, and performance and new media artists— in the classroom and in production. A PhD program in Theatre and Performance Studies exists in the same building as the Playwriting Program. MFA Playwrights and PhD students often collaborate. The [Brown/Trinity MFA in Acting and Directing](#) is located at Trinity Repertory Company in downtown Providence, where Playwriting students study closely with members of the Trinity Repertory Company and often devise and perform with Acting/Directing students.

In addition, all graduate students in the Theatre and Performance Studies Department at Brown University benefit from the flexibility of Brown's graduate system that allows opportunities to take classes throughout the University as well as with distinguished field faculty. MFA programs in Acting and Directing, based at Trinity Repertory Theatre, mean that actors and directors are being trained nearby, and opportunities for intersection are built into the program. Interaction across departments is also possible. The Department maintains close working relationships with the Africana Studies Department and [Rites and Reason Theatre](#) as well as Modern Culture and Media, History of Art and Architecture, and the American Studies and Slavic Studies and Comparative Literature departments, with faculty cross-appointments in these departments. We also maintain close affiliation with the [Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity](#) and the [Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women](#). We also have a close and developing collaboration with Rhode Island School of Design.

All of these associations make the Brown environment alive with opportunities in the critical and performing arts and scholarship. The confluence of a variety of approaches assures an atmosphere of debate, discovery, and overall rigor. A dynamic theatre season at Brown and a slate of courses with significant strength in playwriting, world theatre histories, performance theories, cultural studies, and contemporary performance allow a student to determine the right mix of writing seminars and theatre studies and performance studies. The libraries at Brown also provide exceptional resources for research and house several special collections, among them the Harris Collection of American Drama and Poetry; the Smith Collection of Conjuring, Magicana, and Popular Entertainment Forms; the Albert-Bernard Shaw Collection; and the John Carter Brown

library is renowned for its historical sources pertaining to the Americas, both North and South, before ca. 1825.

3. MFA Playwriting Admissions

For graduate application deadlines please check the [Graduate School website](#). A statement of purpose (also called a personal statement, generally one to three pages), a writing sample, and three letters of recommendation are requested with the application. Also requested are complete official transcripts of all work (graduate and undergraduate) in sealed envelopes. GRE exams are not required. All international applicants whose native language is not English must submit an official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score. An undergraduate major in theatre or performance studies is not required for admission.

For questions about the application process (including GRE/TOEFL submission, LORs, transcripts, and other technical questions), please contact the Graduate School directly at Admission_Graduate@brown.edu. **Applications to the MFA programs are submitted to, and managed through, the Graduate School. Please do not email the department with technical questions or requests to troubleshoot your online application submission.** You can find detailed instructions about the application process and some of the components [here](#). The application for all graduate programs at Brown can be found at <http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/apply>.

Further inquiries regarding the MFA Playwriting Program should be addressed to **Lisa D'Amour**, Box 1897, Brown. University, Providence, RI 02912; email: Lisa_Damour@brown.edu.

4. Financial Support

The program provides a financial aid package that covers tuition, health fee and health insurance for three years of full-time enrollment. In addition, the program provides stipends for fall and spring semesters for each year of full-time enrollment as well as a stipend for two summers (following first and second years). Funding is contingent on students remaining in good standing.

5. The MFA Playwriting Program of Study

MFA students are required to take the graduate playwriting workshop in each semester of their residency. Other classes are electives. Electives can be culled from a wide range of classes in playwriting, theatre studies, performance studies and the offerings of many

departments beyond the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies. All courses are selected by the student, in consultation with advisors from the playwriting faculty. Other faculty in Theatre Arts and Performance Studies are also happy to advise playwrights when desired.

MFA playwrights are provided continuous collaborative opportunity, in and beyond the bounds of theater, to bring their text into space and time. If you are operating within the conventions of a play as classically understood, your script is produced at least once while at Brown. This is realized in cooperation with Brown/Trinity MFA actors and directors, as well as actors, directors and dramaturgs from other areas of study in TAPS. Productions along these lines occur during the [Writing is Live Festival](#). Also available: readings, self-and-peer produced events, conceptual collaborations with designers, means to work with musicians, programmers, poets, scholars, public health workers... We encourage you to define “play” and “production” as liberally as your impulses direct, and we will help you to your vision.

6. MFA Playwriting Curriculum Overview

The MFA Playwriting Program will consist of a minimum of 14 course that include:

- Six (6) semesters of Graduate Playwriting Workshop (TAPS 2310)
- One (1) course in dramaturgy (1000 level course under review with the CCC; required for MFA students)
- Two (2) semesters of Thesis Preparation in the third year of the program (TAPS 2975)
- Five (5) elective courses from throughout the university, including Brown/Trinity courses where appropriate, of which one (1) should be a theory or history course in TAPS or cross-listed in TAPS at the 1000 or 2000 level.

Note: Up to two (2) independent studies may be used toward the total of elective courses. An independent study cannot be used to substitute for the TAPS Theory/History course listed above.

This course load will allow students to participate in the following co-curricular and professional development activities listed below.

Co-curricular activities include:

1. Workshops of creative work in collaboration with actors, directors and designers in years one, two and three (including Brown/Trinity MFA students).
2. Thesis presentation in year three
3. One to two intensive writing retreats per academic year
4. An annual student produced festival of work
5. Periodic workshops with guest artists
6. Networking opportunities with professionals in the field on campus and in New York
7. Mentored experience at the Under The Radar Festival in NYC

8. Teaching/Teaching Assistant responsibilities in year two (2). Since the MFA is a terminal degree that qualifies them for university teaching, all students should have teaching experience such that they can pursue these possibilities after graduation.

7. Elective Courses

Recommended Faculty

Barrymore (Tony) Bogues
 John Cayley
 Curt Columbus
 Beshara Doumani
 Thalia Field
 Richard Fishman
 Forrest Gander
 Spencer Golub
 Carol Maso
 Kym Moore
 Elmo Terry Morgan
 Janet Cooper Nelson
 Tricia Rose
 Rebecca Schneider
 Patricia Sobral
 Cole Swenson
 Todd Winkler
 Patricia Ybarra

The Africana Studies Department is very much a partner with the program; their full array of teachers are recommended, and their space is very approachable for special projects (they partner on Writing is Live).

Recommended Classes

LITR 1150N Novella
 LITR 1150B Foreign Home
 TAPS 1240 Performance Historiography and Theatre History – Ybarra,
 Schneider, Golub
 TAPS 1380 Mise en Scene – Golub
 AFRI 1110 Voices beneath the Veil – Morgan

Brown offers a full menu of specialty courses currently in the areas of Theatre Drama and Performance of the Americas; European Theatre and Performance Traditions; Non-Western Theatre and Performance; Twentieth-Century Western Theatre and Performance; Russian Theatre and Drama; Revolution as a Work of Art; Mise en Scene; Performance Theory; New Theories for a Baroque Stage; Ethnography and Performance; Feminist, Race-Critical, Queer Theory and Performance; Abstraction and Resistance;

Historiography, Political Theatre and Performance, Neoliberalism and Performance; Studies in Liveness and New Materialism; Archive Culture; Labor and Theatricality; Subjects and Objects: Evidence as Metaphor and Constraint; Wittgenstein, Writing and Performance; Performance Art and Everyday Life.

Our Department also offers courses in Dance Studies and practical courses in theatre and design that some of our graduate students have found to be quite useful. These courses offer different methodologies and discourses as well as variety in subject matter. In addition, our diverse field faculty offer courses in Music, Africana Studies, English, Literary Arts, Comparative Literature, Classics, Anthropology, Modern Culture and Media, etc. There are many other relevant courses involving film studies, digital media studies, literary theory and genre studies, religion and ritualistic performance, art history and representation, cultural studies and political discourse, and gender and identity politics, many of which are cross-listed and some team-taught through two departments, indicating the openness to academic border-crossing and resource-sharing that is the norm at Brown. Students may choose to audit an elective course, or, depending on the Professor, may be allowed to attend without registering (sometimes called [vagabonding](#)). Brown's "shopping period" (the period during which you can add a course without incurring a fee) allows students to sit in on several different courses before deciding upon a final course schedule for the semester. Please be aware pre-registration is required for continuing undergraduate and graduate students (during the preceding April for Semester 1 and November for Semester 2), in accordance with a schedule established by the Registrar. Students who do not preregister by the deadline will have a \$15 pre-registration fee assessed to their student account.

Students are encouraged to audit, vagabond, and produce widely.

8. The Goals of Writing for Performance by Year: Articulation, Atelier, Action

Year One: Articulation

Writers read their own work (selections of up to 40 minutes), at a day-long retreat with the other writers and the PhDs early in the term; this overlaps with the general orientation to Brown and Brown/Trinity (B/T). First year PhDs may also present on their work. First year writers-for-performance also read ten minutes of their work in company with Lit Arts MFAs and other writers across disciplines at Anthology Night, which takes place once a semester (produced by Lit Arts at the McCormack Theatre). All writers-for-performance read their work in Graduate Workshop at least twice a semester. Writers are expected to deliver an average of one new, sustained text per semester. Finally, all first years participate in the Writing Is Live Festival (WIL) (see section 9). To this end, first year writers take Directing at Brown/Trinity with Brian Mertes (Head of the MFA in Directing), in part to build ensemble with B/T actors and directors for the sake of the WIL processes. In your first year, you will also work with the Director of WTP to construct syllabi for teaching in your second year (see below).

Year Two: Atelier

In this year, students move from notation into live time and space. Second years take their work further in the WIL festival (see section 9). All writers-for-performance read their work in Graduate Workshop at least twice a semester. Writers are expected to deliver an average of one new, sustained text per semester. Second year students also teach playwriting for the Department or serve as Teaching Assistants in Department courses (See section 10). Note: Advanced drafts of scripts are due April 13 of your second year. These scripts will be the basis of concentrated work in your third year.

Year Three: Action

Participation in the Grad Writing seminar is expected, including preparatory sessions with B/T actors as per Articulations and Ateliers. You will have a public reading with one day of rehearsal during the Writing is Live Festival in Jan/Feb (see section 9), directed by collaborating directors from the Flea Theater in New York (more following), using a cast of B/T actors. Writers and B/T directors travel together to the Under the Radar Festival, to see work and meet art-makers. Students in their third year also participate in an Immersive Retreat, with an acting company outside Brown/Trinity as well as a one-week intensive with NY actors, directors, and dramaturges, in cooperation with the Flea Theater's resident company. There may or may not be a public viewing in New York. The retreat takes place at the end of April of the students' final year. In addition to finding the text, and the

text finding physical life, the Immersive Retreat process is meant to bring writers into contact with potential fellow travelers beyond Providence.

Candidates for graduation submit a thesis (a text of their choosing representing the most thorough exercise of their guiding experiments) in May. Please see this page for more information on thesis requirements: <https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/masters-thesis-guidelines>. These are also stored in Brown's library system, digitally.

9. The Writing is Live Festival

“Writing is Live” (WIL) is our annual exploration of writing in encounter with live public exchange. It takes place in January and February of each year, though preparation happens much earlier in the year. Public performances, events, or readings are staged so that writers can receive feedback. WIL centers on the work of our MFA Writing for Performance candidates, but widens out to a celebration of new writing-for-the-live across Brown and Brown/Trinity. Our texts may take forms narrative and imagistic, compact or durational, sited in a theater or – anywhere else. Our scripts may feature improvisation, orature, music, dance, video... noise and hospitality and activism and any manner of human behavior. The purpose of WIL is to bring our writers closer to an understanding of the situations they have proposed—the behaviors they are asking for from the co-makers (artists, audience).

For First Years in WIL:

The Articulation period focuses study on notation—the transfer of concept to a plan that can be shared effectively among collaborators. This used to be called a reading, but not all of our writers notate with text. Those with choreographic impulses, say, or with a background in street protest, may require live bodies, graphics, or social gatherings as draft elements of their broader intention. For the WIL festival in any given year, WIL drafts are due November 1, though conversation on possible subjects and strategies begins prior, in Grad Workshop, starting at the top of the term. Toward WIL, Brown provides 20 hours of rehearsal, no light cues, no props. A public presentation of the event formerly known as a reading will take place in the Festival. The process is as follows.

Regarding casting: first priority in casting goes to B/T actors, followed by undergraduates, PhD's, and the greater Brown community. Regarding budget: there is no budget for actors from the community or for lights or props.

Regarding directors: The pieces are directed by B/T directors. Directors, actors and spaces may not be used beyond the 20 hours. Writers have access to three-hour workshops (preparatory sessions for the articulations) with B/T actors and directors in the fall semester. Second and third year writers share access. Writers must submit plans for use of the time in these workshops before the end of September of the same Fall. Best effort is made to provide each writer with at least two of these workshops; there may be occasions

where writers want more or fewer. In cases where the pool of available sessions is variable, open slots will be made available on a competitive basis (weighing, for example, viable resources—cast size, space needs). Writers are mentored, through the direct participation of the Head of the WFP Program, along with WIL producer(s). The producer(s) of WIL are announced at the start of every year. Production directors and casts are assigned by the Head of Playwriting and the WIL producer(s), in consultation with other program faculty.

For Second Years in WIL:

The process for WIL is much the same as the first year. Preparatory sessions are available during the fall semester with B/T team as with the Articulation Year. However, during January and February of WIL, second years in the Atelier phase are given 30 hours of rehearsal and a modest budget (in the \$500 range, for sets/costume/lights). Casting priority remains the B/T team, followed by undergrads, PhDs, or other members of the immediate Brown family. But there may be cases where a compelling argument can be made for the participation of the broader Providence community (as when, say, the project centers on identities not represented by Brown or B/T). A casting meeting with the WIL producers is scheduled for early November; the WIL producers have final sign-off on casts, and space.

For Third Years in WIL:

Third years have a public reading with one day of rehearsal during the Writing is Live Festival, directed by company members of the Flea Theater in NY, and cast from B/T actors.

10. Teaching or Assisting in your Second Year

All second year MFA students in the Writing or Performance Program are awarded a Teaching Assistantship or Teaching Fellowship through the Graduate School. Assignments are made by the program for teaching or assisting in that year and the student will be notified of their assignment by May 15 of your first year though they will have begun work on syllabi prior to that date. Often students teach Playwriting One or Playwriting Two to undergraduate students, or they assist in a course, such as Elmo Terry-Morgan's "Voices Beneath the Veil." If assigned to teach their own course, they must take a companion class offered through the Department. TAPS 2300 is an intensive seminar in which the head of the Playwriting Program meets with students individually and as a team, sharing in the evolutions of curricular design and practice, offering close comment and tailored assignments (suggested readings; writing tasks). Taken in the second year, and simultaneously with their teaching, TAPS 2300 readies playwrights for teaching by helping them stay several steps ahead of their class. It prepares them for service at the head of a classroom, provides them with mentorship as they conduct their class, and helps them assess their experience at the end of assignments and, ultimately, at the end of the term.

11. Frequently Asked Questions about TAPS in General

- a. Who provides administrative support for the program?
- b. What are the program facilities and services?
- c. How does the department communicate (email, etc.)?
- d. How are Graduate Students represented in/to the Department?
- e. What if I have a Grievance?
- f. What if I have a Change in Status?
- g. What is the Exchange Scholar Program?
- h. Is there anything the Graduate School needs me to do once I get to campus?
- i. Can I get mail at the department?
- j. What about parking? Or housing?

a. Who provides administrative support for the doctoral program?

- **The Staff**

The two members of the TAPS administrative staff you should get to know immediately are: **Jamie Tyrol**, Department Manager (jamie_tyrol@brown.edu, 401-863-6718) and **Jo Bynum**, Academic Coordinator (nita_bynum@brown.edu, 401-863-3283). Their office, Lyman 106, is the main hub of the Department. They know a lot about the bureaucratic niceties of being a graduate student during your years here and can answer most of your practical questions, including those about payroll, registration, reimbursements, IDs, photocopying, mail, keys, etc. If you need keys or have facilities questions, please contact the Academic Events & Facilities Manager, Chris Redihan (chris_redihan@brown.edu, 401-863-6951). For more information about our facilities and staff, please see our [website](#).

- **The Head of Playwriting**

The Head of Playwriting oversees the Writing for Performance MFA program and will be your guide and primary advisor through your entire course of study. The Head can address questions regarding the timeline for your graduate studies as well as TA and proctor assignments, or departmental standing and procedures. It remains the responsibility of each graduate student to fulfill departmental curricular guidelines, and to discuss their course selections with the Head of Playwriting. The Head of Playwriting holds regular office hours, or you may make an appointment by email.

- **The Director of Graduate Studies**

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) oversees all of the internal academic affairs of the departmental graduate programs and coordinates the programs with the Graduate School. The DGS will be sure that your progress reports are

submitted and that your TAs assignments are made. The DGS holds regular office hours, or you may make an appointment by email.

b. What are the program facilities and services?

- **Faculty and Graduate Offices**

Faculty offices are primarily located on the second Floor and Basement Floor of Lyman Hall. The Department's Administrative Office is on the first floor, in room 106. The Department Chair's Office is also on the first floor, inside the main office. Students serving as TAs will have access to Lyman 009 and have priority for the use of that room as a space to hold office hours and related tasks. It will be important for all users to coordinate schedules in making equitable use of the room. Office hours should be reported to the Academic Coordinator, Jo Bynum as soon as possible and posted outside the door to alert your students to your schedule and to avoid double booking of the room. TAs for TAPS 0030 will not be given access to Lyman 002 ("the Cave") for office hours.

- **Graduate Lounge**

The grad lounge is located in Lyman 213. You will be assigned an individual mailbox there. Only grads, faculty, and staff have key access to the lounge, so any deliveries or notes/papers from undergraduate students should be left in the general graduate student mailbox in the main office. Mail is delivered from the general mailbox to personal boxes once daily by one of the graduate students. It contains computers and a printer, as well as a small refrigerator. There is also a telephone (401-863-3272). Please note it has no outgoing long distance or voicemail capability, but can be used to receive calls, call on-campus or to make local calls. Students are expected to furnish their own supplies for their coursework and/or personal communications. Personal and research needs do not receive administrative support such as typing, copying, etc. Please report any technical problems with the computers in the grad lounge to our IT person, Eric Scantlebury (eric_scantlebury@brown.edu). Be aware that IT does not provide support for privately owned computers or mobile devices. If the printer in the grad lounge is out of ink, please let Beth know as soon as possible.

- **Computer Clusters and Training Elsewhere on Campus**

Computer clusters, scanners, and printers can also be found in Brown's University libraries. Training in a wide variety of software applications is offered by of [Computing and Information Services](#) (CIS).

- **Libraries**

The main humanities library at Brown is the John D. Rockefeller Library (aka “the Rock”). Tour of the library can be arranged on request. The [main website](#) of the Brown University Libraries is a portal to electronic research tools and services. Brown’s library system also includes the Orwig Music Library, and many other small, [specialized collections](#) specific to certain departments and programs that you will get to know as you become involved with them. In addition, Brown’s library relies on a consortium of local lenders, most immediately the nearby RISD library and the Providence Athenaeum, which collections Brown students can access through our on-line library catalogue, [Josiah](#).

The [John Hay Library](#) houses the University Library's collections of rare books and manuscripts, the University Archives, and many special collections on a wide variety of topics. Notable areas of strength include American literature and popular culture, political and diplomatic history, the history of science, book arts and graphics.

The [John Carter Brown Library](#) is an internationally renowned, constantly growing [collection](#) of primary historical sources pertaining to the Americas, both North and South, before ca. 1825.

The Performing Arts Librarian is Laura Stokes. Based in [Orwig Music Library](#), she works on collections and research in subjects covered by TAPS and the Music Department. She maintains the [Performing Arts guide](#) (which includes links to the Routledge Performance Archive and Jacob’s Pillow Dance Interactive collection, among others). If you have items you would like the library to purchase, or if you would like to have a library consultation on a project, please let her know. Her office is Orwig 108. The best way to reach her is via email (Laura_Stokes@brown.edu).

Brown students also have borrowing privileges at the RISD’s [Fleet Library](#) located at 15 Westminister Street.

Graduate students writing a dissertation or thesis or literary work are can apply for their own study carrel. The application for this can be found on the [library website](#). In addition to providing you with a place to work, a carrel is useful because you can charge limited circulation books to your carrel for longer periods, rather than charging them to your ID card for a short loan. Books charged to your carrel must be left on the carrel; they cannot be removed from the library unless charged to your ID. No books may be placed on your carrel without charging them out to the carrel at the circulation desk. Lockers are also available for graduate student use. Keys may be obtained from the circulation desk.

c. How does TAPS communicate?

- **Email**

Most departmental announcements and much of the daily information flow are communicated via email. Therefore, it is extremely important that you [establish your account](#) by mid-July prior to your enrollment, that you check your Brown email regularly, respond to requests for information or meetings in a timely manner, and that you keep the office staff informed of any changes to your contact information. If you wish to forward your Brown email to another email address, you can do it immediately after activating your Brown account, but please be aware you will need to use your Brown email and credentials to login to computer clusters, Banner, course websites and to access the library from off-campus. Students are urged to check their email and mailboxes regularly, as meetings and special events may be announced on short notice.

The Department also maintains Brown email contact info and bios for all graduate students on the website at <http://www.brown.edu/academics/theatre-arts-performance-studies/graduate-students>. If you would like to submit (or change) a bio and/or picture at any time, please contact the Academic Assistant at the front desk.

If you are teaching or TAing in a given semester, please get in the habit of using **your Brown email addresses in all correspondence with students and also using your Brown credentials to log into Banner (selfservice.brown.edu)**. The system will not recognize you any other way and using dueling emails can cause logistical headaches for your students and the staff.

- **Listservs**

There are several Department email listservs/newsletters that you will be automatically subscribed to when you activate your Brown email address. Subscription to **TAPSGRAD** is restricted to Brown TAPS grad students, grad faculty, and associated artists. [Listservs](#) provide a forum for all kinds of communication relevant to the TAPS grad community, including lecture announcements, calls for papers, job and grant leads, social events, questions, etc. You are also automatically subscribed to “This Week at TAPS”—the weekly bulletin of upcoming events in the Department that is sent out weekly during the Fall and Spring semesters. If you are not receiving regular departmental notices or are unsure how the listservs should be used, please contact the Academic Assistant. There is also a PhD listserv that you can request to be added to (it will feature academic matters that don’t need to be circulated on the full TAPS grad list but that, if you are interested, you can join). If you want to be added to the TAPSPHD listserv, let the DGS know.

d. How are Graduate Students represented in/to the department?

- **Graduate Liaison to the Faculty**

This person attends most faculty meetings as the representative of the interests of the graduate students at TAPS and in communication with the DGS. This position normally rotates annually among the Lyman Hall based graduate students, and is elected by the graduate students. In the past the position has always been filled a doctoral student, but if you are interested as an MFA, please put yourself forward with the other graduate students as open for selection. There is no reason a WFP MFA can't serve.

- **Graduate Student Files**

The Department maintains a file for every graduate student. Your file is a record of your graduate career at Brown that is used to help the faculty assess your progress and to establish internal rankings (see below). Most internal documentation (such as funding awards from the Graduate School or Department, the passage of language exams, etc.) will be entered into your file for you. You have the right to view your file, and you have the right to submit documentation to your file. It is in your best interest to make sure that all of your achievements are documented. For example, if you receive an external grant or honor, you should submit a copy of the award letter to your file via the Academic Assistant.

- **Graduate Student Progress Reports**

It is important for students to receive feedback on their performance in the program and candid evaluations of their progress toward their degrees. At the end of every semester, the faculty meets as a group to discuss each student's performance and participation in courses, their performance as a TA or proctor, and, when appropriate, their completion of program requirements and progress on the dissertation. During this faculty meeting each student is ranked according to the Graduate School's status rankings of "good," "satisfactory," or "warning." Areas needing improvement are identified and concerns are voiced. Students receive these evaluations as part of the written reports from the DGS at the end of each semester, and are encouraged to use them as an occasion for checking in with their advisor and the DGS about what the program's expectations are, and how best to meet them. Your rank in the program has a direct impact on your funding. Graduate School funding guarantees are contingent upon maintenance of good academic standing in the program.

e. What if I have a grievance?

Students having trouble with a faculty member should consult the DGS. The Graduate School has adopted a University-wide grievance procedure, to which you may turn if these less formal and local measures fail. These procedures are available [here](#). If you want to discuss your situation with someone outside the Department, contact the Dean of the Graduate School or the [Ombudsperson](#). Note that the Chair and the DGS are considered, by [Title IX](#), as "responsible employees." If matters of potential sexual harassment or abuse are brought to the Chair or the DGS's attention,

he/she is legally bound to report them. The Chair or DGS can direct you to confidential interlocutors if you prefer.

If one of your students complains about your teaching and you cannot resolve the problem yourself, you should consult with the course supervisor or faculty evaluator. If the issue cannot be resolved at that point, you should take the matter to the DGS. In cases where there is some disagreement between you and the faculty member or between either and the DGS, the Chair will review the evidence, discuss the matter with everyone involved, and report his or her conclusions in writing to you. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of this process, you are always free to pursue the Graduate School's grievance procedures.

f. What if I have a change in status?

Any changes in a student's status (leave of absence, withdrawals, part-time, changes in degree program) should be sent in writing to the DGS. The DGS in turn submits notification of any change to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the Graduate School. For more on leaves and other status changes please consult the [Graduate School handbook](#). Material about readmission after a leave (including childbirth accommodation, family leave of absence, personal leave and medical leave) can be found there as well.

g. What is the Exchange Scholar Program?

Brown participates in an Exchange Scholar Program that enables advanced graduate students to study for one or two semesters in the graduate school of participating institutions, including the University of California at Berkeley, Brown, the University of Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale. The exchange provides graduate students with the opportunity to draw upon the particular strengths of the exchange institution and to explore their discipline from a different perspective. Courses taken and research conducted with faculty members at one of the institutions above will be registered on the academic record and official transcript at Brown. Students are eligible to be Exchange Scholars only after completing an academic year of study in a doctoral degree program at Brown. To participate in this program, you must maintain full enrollment at your home institution and remain an active student while studying as an exchange scholar at the host institution. The host institution will charge for student health services if that is not included as part of tuition; the student may purchase either school's student health insurance. Students with external fellowships can continue that support away from Brown; students may hold a TA position at Brown while studying at Harvard. The program has also benefited students whose advisors are on sabbatical or have taken a new position at one of the participating institutions. More information can be found on the grad school website at <http://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/exchange-scholar-program>.

Cross-Registration at Harvard University: There is a long-standing agreement between Harvard and Brown to allow cross-registration of graduate students in courses in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences only without paying tuition to the host institution. To do this, you must get the appropriate forms from the Registrar's Office and obtain the signatures of the director of each graduate program and a dean from each Graduate School. If the student wants to take an entire semester's course work at Harvard, he or she should enroll in the Exchange Scholar program. Ordinarily, this option is only recommended for more advanced students.

h. What does the Graduate School need me to do once I get to campus?

Please make sure to look over the [New Student Checklist](#) that the Graduate School maintains. **This includes state and federal tax paperwork, which, if neglected, will prevent you from being able to register for classes or receive your stipend.** If you have any questions about any of these requirements, please ask the Department Manager or the Academic Assistant at the front desk in the main office.

i. Can I get mail at the department?

The Department mailing address is: Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, Box 1897, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912. The physical address of Lyman Hall is 83 Waterman Street, Providence RI 02912. All mail sent to the Department goes first to the general graduate mailbox in the main office. It is delivered to graduate students' mailboxes in the grad student lounge by whichever graduate student checks the mail first on any given day. All regular mail (USPS) should be sent to (your name) at Box 1897, although your routine "domestic" mail (bills and correspondence) should be sent to your home address whenever possible. The mailroom refers to both department and box numbers when sorting mail. Therefore the use of a complete address is recommended. Packages from other courier services (i.e., UPS, Fedex) may be sent to (your name) at the Waterman Street address. It's a good idea to give either the Department Manager or the Academic Assistant a heads up if you are having a package delivered.

j. What about parking? Or housing?

- **Parking**

Parking on streets near TAPS is metered during weekday business hours (until 6pm) and heavily monitored by the police. Free on-street parking near campus is possible, but one must usually look several blocks from Lyman in order to find it and it's usually restricted to two-hour blocks. There are Brown-maintained parking lots for which a permit can be purchased but the wait lists can be very long, sometimes years long. Meter readers are aggressive and efficient, and it is almost certain that improperly parked vehicles will be ticketed. It is difficult and expensive to park near campus on a regular basis, and is discouraged.

Alternatively, Brown offers free transportation to all full time students/faculty/staff with a Brown ID on any bus or trolley operated by RIPTA,

Rhode Island's public transportation system. Zipcar also operates several lots around campus. There is also a campus 24-hour [shuttle service](#). Consult the [Transportation Office](#) at 401-863-3157 for more information.

- **Housing**

Housing is a matter of personal preference, however you should be aware that there are several resources you may find helpful in making your living arrangements. The Brown graduate community [listserv, GSBB-L](#), is often used to exchange information about available or desired housing. (Subscription works on the same model as our departmental listserv.) The Graduate School itself offers limited on-campus housing for grad students (See Graduate School website). You may also wish to consult with the University Auxiliary Housing office, which maintains a housing bulletin board on campus as well as online. Craigslist.org is also a very helpful resource. Please check the [Graduate Student Council Website](#) for more information.