

# JOIN US AS A THEATRE THIRD LEARN. SHARE. CREATE.

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## A Definitive Guide to Being a Theatre Third at Sarah Lawrence

Created through a collaboration between Aardvark and the Creating Community through Musical Theatre Class

### Core Values Statement

Sarah Lawrence College Theatre Program is a community of generous and engaged artists who value diverse, intentional, and rigorous research, process, and creation. We hold each other and ourselves accountable to responsibly challenge ourselves and each other to foster our growth as individuals and collaborative artists. We support innovation, not only in the art we produce but also in the systems we make to learn, share, and create. Through an interdisciplinary curriculum that prioritizes equality, care, and experimentation, we aim to create an artistic environment steeped in joy to envision and build a better future. This is an open and inclusive community where everyone is welcome.

### Director of the Theatre Program

Caden Manson is a director and media artist. He is a co-founder of the performance/media ensemble Big Art Group, editor at Contemporary Performance, and curator of the annual Special Effects Festival in NYC. He has been published in PAJ, Theater Magazine, Theater der Zeit, and Theater Journal. He formerly headed The John Wells Directing Program MFA at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama. <http://cademanson.com/>

### Who's Who: Theatre Program Staff

**Caden Manson** Director of the Theatre Program  
**Neelam Vaswani** Director of Production  
**Stephen Tyler Davis** Theatre Program Manager  
**Susan Sears** Associate Producer  
**Susannah Baron** Production Manager/Lighting Supervisor  
**Rob Gould** Technical Supervisor  
**Allen Lang** Theatre & Civic Engagement Director  
**Liz Prince** Costume Shop Supervisor  
**Lake Simons** Puppet Shop Manager  
**Graeme Gillis** Downstage Manager

### What is a Third?

At Sarah Lawrence College, students choose three academic courses per semester. Should a student choose to be a *Theatre Third*, one of those academic courses is labelled "Theatre Program". A student's Theatre Program is a combination of interdisciplinary theatre classes created by the individual based on their interests. These theatre classes are called "components." Ten hours of theatre component class time + Tech Credit (see below) make up a complete Theatre Program. A complete Theatre Program counts as  $\frac{1}{3}$  academic credit load.

### How Do I Register as a Theatre Third?

During registration week, students who choose to be a Theatre Third should *not* list individual theatre components on the MySLC registration form. Instead, Theatre Thirds should register for "Theatre Program" as one of three academic courses. Registration for theatre components is done through a separate process directly through the Theatre Program on a separate online form. When you register as a Theatre Third, you're expected to fulfill requirements of your registered theatre components, attend all Theatre Meetings and Think Tanks, support theatre community projects, and fulfill Tech Credit.

### How Do I Interview for Theatre Components?

The week before registration, students may sign up for an interview time with the professors of theatre components they are interested in taking. All online interviews may be individual meetings or small groups with the professor, but will be set up through MySLC using the scheduling software Calendly. Once you've interviewed professors, you can submit the component requests through this form: <https://my.slc.edu/theatre/form/>. Tuesday morning of Registration Week, the Theatre Program hosts a "Kick Off" event to answer questions, introduce you to other students, learn about faculty and new classes, and walk you through a full step-by-step of the registration process. If you have any trouble along the way, you can always pop into [Stephen's Registration Week Help Zoom Room](#). Often

popular classes will fill up, so the registration form asks for “alternate” selections. If you get “bumped” from a classlist, Caden and Stephen will work with you through second round placements to help you create a Theatre Program unique to your interests.

### **What is Theatre Meeting?**

Theatre Meeting is a bi-weekly gathering for the theatre community to announce events, upcoming productions, auditions, opportunities, jobs, and Tech Credit sign ups. This is also an opportunity for students to connect, ask questions, and get involved on campus. Most announcements are also listed in the Weekly Newsletter to all Theatre Thirds sent from [TheatreDesk@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:TheatreDesk@sarahlawrence.edu) every Friday afternoon. To make an announcement at Theatre Meeting you can always contact Stephen. Register for all Theatre Meetings [here](#).

### **What are THINK TANKS?**

Guest Artist-driven conversations for the whole community! Attendance is required and recorded as part of each student’s Tech Credit.

### **What is Tech Credit?**

As an extension of our commitment to collaboration and interdisciplinarity, our community learns through hands-on assignments with semester projects through a program called Tech Credit. Tech Credit is a combination of two parts: 20 hours of tech learning and 1 Run Crew assignment. Tech Credit hours are earned over the course of the year by participating in productions in a number of ways: crew calls, box office and house management, acting as a key student, audition organizing, and attending SLCTheatre events. Theatre Thirds are required to accumulate 20 hours over the course of the year. (Only 10 hours are required for Seniors.) All opportunities to earn Tech Credit hours are announced at Theatre Meetings and published in the Weekly Newsletter. In addition to 20 Tech Credit hours, each Theatre Third will participate in a Run Crew assignment within the school year, where they learn hands-on during a semester project. Students can sign up for a semester project as a stage manager, designer, light board operator, sound operator, deck crew and/or followspot ops. Tech Credit is an integral part of SLCTheatre, making space for community members to come together, support student work, and learn through semester projects and crews. Tech Credit is tracked and considered in the overall completion of an academic year as a Theatre Third. So join a semester project, experience the steps in developing and producing projects, and build relationships through collaborations!

*In short, 20 hours of Tech Credit + Run Crew = Complete Tech Credit.*

Questions? Email Stephen: [sdavis2@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:sdavis2@sarahlawrence.edu)

### **Does the Theatre Program Offer Classes Other Than Acting?**

The Theatre program is interdisciplinary and encourages students to take on a diverse program of components. Components include performance, design, movement, puppetry, devising, playwriting, musical theatre, civic engagement, stage management, and more! Theatre Thirds can also take a Music or Dance component as part of their Theatre Program with prior approval by the professor and their Don. See our full Theatre Curriculum [here](#).

### **How Can I Be Involved In the Semester Projects as a performer?**

All students are invited to participate in SLCTheatre Semester Projects General Auditions. An announcement with links to auditions forms will be emailed to the entire campus and shared in the weekly newsletter distributed every Friday afternoon. Depending on what the semester projects call for, some semester auditions are in person while some semesters the program uses a self tape audition process. The Theatre Program always hosts an [Audition Workshop](#) at the beginning of the fall semester to help performers prepare. Auditions should be 1-2 minutes, and performers are encouraged to show directors who they are through a monologue, song, dance, recited found text, or by playing an instrument.

### **How Can I Be Involved In the Semester Projects behind the scenes?**

The program also offers opportunities for students to work as designers, stage managers, production team, etc. To explore these opportunities, you submit an [interest form](#) to the Production Office available registration week. For information about auditions, semester projects, or if you have access needs, you can always reach out to Stephen or Neelam.

### **What Is the Rehearsal Process Like For an SLCTheatre Project?**

Rehearsal, Tech, and Performance dates are carefully planned within the Theatre Program calendar presented along with project information at the time of auditions. All projects are focused on process. The First Look Reading Series, there are roughly 10 hours of rehearsal, 1 day of tech, and 1 Wednesday evening public reading. New Works and Published Plays have approximately 4 weeks of rehearsal, 1 week of tech, with 3 performances. The Devised Residency has a development period of approximately 5 weeks, with a presentation the following semester. Musicals are a longer process. Rehearsal weeks are generally 6-10PM, 4 weekdays and 1 weekend. No rehearsals on Wednesdays.

### **I’m Not a Theatre Third...Can I Still Participate in Semester Projects?**

YES! We welcome everyone at all skill levels, theatre person or not! Audition! Submit to be a designer! Join a run crew! Priority is given to students who have class requirements, but there is always room for anyone who wants to be involved. For information about auditions, semester projects, or if you have special access needs, you can always reach out to Stephen Tyler Davis, Program Manager.

### **Can I Take a Double Third in Theatre?**

If you do not study abroad, and are at least a sophomore, you may “double third” in Theatre. This means instead of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of your academic credits,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of your schedule may consist of theatre components, while only taking one academic course. This will give you a course load of around 6-8 theatre components rather than 3-4. Students are welcome to do this, but be aware that students are not allowed to go over 50 theatre credits total. Be sure to get approval from your Don as well as registrar Dan Licht.

### **How Can I Propose a Project to the Theatre Program?**

In October of Fall semester and March of Spring semester the Theatre Program announces open submissions for proposals of student-led creative projects. All are welcome to apply! Keep an eye on the Weekly Newsletter for proposal submission details.

### **How Are Semester Projects Chosen?**

A committee of students, staff, and faculty evaluate proposals based on [this published evaluation criteria](#). The faculty and production staff review project selections for scope and academic standing of lead artists. Announcements of selected SLCTheatre semester projects are then announced to the entire campus. Anyone can propose a project, and collaborators are encouraged to submit as a team.

### **Can I Check Out Props, Costumes, or Set Pieces for My Classwork and Independent Theatre Projects?**

A perk of being a Theatre Third is access to the Theatre Program props shop, costume shop, and the scenic storage. To check out items from the program you must fill out a live request form in the [Production Handbook](#). Once you fill out your form, the corresponding department supervisor will contact you. Unfortunately non-theatre students, and film crews are unable to make requests.

### **How Can I Get a Job in the Theatre Program?**

At the beginning of each semester theatre jobs are posted on [MySLC](#), announced by the Theatre Production Office, and distributed through the Weekly Newsletter. Anyone interested can apply via the Google form found in the Production Handbook. Jobs include: program assistant, production office assistant, marketing, scenic and electricians crews, costume shop, among others. Priority is given to Work Study students first, then open up to other applicants. Some jobs require a specialized skill set. SLCTheatre job descriptions are listed [here on MySLC](#). All students are welcome to apply.

### **How can you book a space to rehearse in?**

In order to reserve a space, you can book through Program Manager, Stephen Tyler Davis. Priority is given to Theatre Program projects, class work, Grads, and Theatre Thirds. Reserving a space does *not* grant you permission to use any technical equipment. To use any equipment, you must be trained and approved by the Production Staff.

### **Will I Also Get to Work With the MFA Graduate Chorts?**

Undergraduate and Graduate Students have many opportunities to collaborate. Each year SLC admits a cohort of 8-15 artists who focus on process, collaboration, and embodied practice over a two-year period. MFA students are in many of the same components with undergraduates and are often the lead artists for Semester Projects. Undergrads take 3-4 components per year, while Grads take 8-12 components with grad specific requirements, while developing field wide research, an embodied thesis, and written thesis.

### **What is Downstage?**

DownStage is a theatre component that is an intensive, hands-on conference in creative theatrical production. The class produces an autonomous theatre company within the SLC theatre curriculum, based on the non-profit theatre model. Together they craft a mission statement then curate and produce a season in support of that mission. Students are responsible for all aspects of production: determining the budget and producing a full season of events and productions, both in-person and online. They fill technical and artistic positions, and sit as the board of directors of a functioning theatre organization. In addition to their obligations to class and designated productions, DownStage producers are expected to hold regular office hours. The class operates out of a designated black box theatre in the PAC with their own office, shop, booth, rep plot, light board and sound board.

### **Are There Theatre and Performance Opportunities Outside of SLCTheatre?**

Yes! There are so many awesome student run theatre companies! These companies operate entirely independently from the SLC Theatre Program and are student-run, student directed, and student-performed. They are registered through GryphonLink and are frequently funded by the Student Senate. All artistic and administrative decisions, including the choice of material, casting, design, and promotion are made by the students, independent of the SLC Theatre Program. SLC Indie Theatres function in a complementary relationship to the SLC Theatre Program and Downstage, creating additional opportunities in the performing arts for all SLC students.

### **Here are some of the companies:**

- Melancholy Players
- The Naked Shakespeare Companies
- MTE Musical Theatre Ensemble
- Drag Union
- SLC Burlesque

- Treble in Paradise Acapella Group
- Midnight Cabaret
- Rocky Horror Picture Show

**That's A lot. How am I supposed to keep up with all this stuff?**

Don't worry. Every Friday we send out a weekly newsletter with clickable links of every upcoming event. Auditions, shows, meetings, Tech Credit opportunities... it's all in the newsletter!

**Who are some notable Sarah Lawrence Alumni Artists?** Jordan Peele, Julianna Margulies, David Lindsay-Abaire, Tovah Feldshuh, J.J. Abrams, Carly Simon, Leslie Gore, Dan Hurlin, Meredith Monk, Holly Robinson-Peete, David Warren, Kyra Sedgwick, Gabrielle Cataris, Larissa Olynik, Lauren Holly, Golden Brooks and so many more!

**For more information about the program and current events please visit:** [www.slctheatre.com](http://www.slctheatre.com)

**Join us on social media:**

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/slctheatre>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/slctheatreofficial>