Theater and Performance Studies Producer’s Packet

While this packet contains information that is specific to the TAPS Black Box inventories and operation, its policies are applicable to any Curricular Production in Theater and Performance Studies.

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Policies, Guidelines, and Resources for the use of the TAPS Black Box

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Greetings Producers,

The Theater and Performance Studies producer track upon which you are embarking is a model that is unique to Yale. There are many reasons that one might choose to produce: many students, regardless of major, gain valuable experience and gratification from supporting curricular performance work in this way. For TAPS majors: in order to propose a senior production project as part of the TAPS curricular production season, one of the senior executive producers must first have served as producer on a Theater and Performance Studies curricular production. This model benefits current seniors, who require active, trustworthy, and devoted producers in order to mount successful productions. It also offers juniors an important perspective on the process of theater making, allowing a firsthand appreciation for the role that good management plays in producing effective work and engendering a sense of the qualities desirable in future collaborators.

The first step in becoming a producer is to align yourself with a Theater and Performance Studies curricular production. Information about the season’s productions and their executive producers is available from Nathan Roberts, the TAPS Production Manager. It is the responsibility of anyone who wishes to produce to make arrangements to do so. Executive producers— that is, the seniors enrolled in THST 491 for whom the production serves as part of the senior requirement – may work with any producer they wish, major or non-major (there is a limit of two co-producers per production). The THST 491 class tracks the senior project production process through its conception, design, and production, providing an environment in which to develop ideas, discuss challenges, and reflect on successes and failures. Producers, along with designers, dramaturgs, and other members of the creative team, will join the executive producer(s) in 491 for a design presentation preceding the load-in of the show.

To be a producer is to take on a position of leadership. In order to satisfactorily complete the job of producing, student producers— at a minimum – must:

1) Respond swiftly to communication from team members;
2) Coordinate and manage load-in and strike;
3) Share the workload equitably, if there are two co-producers;
4) Exercise initiative and diligence throughout the process. This includes:
   a. Doing what needs to be done when it needs to be done, or making sure someone else does;
   b. Doing what someone else should have done but hasn’t, or making sure someone else does.

The majority of senior project productions are staged in the TAPS Black Box. The Black Box theater has two primary functions: It serves studio classes in acting, directing, design, and playwriting during the day, and as rehearsal and performance space for TAPS senior projects during evenings and weekends. All users of the Black Box have an obligation to be conscientious neighbors to the film screenings and lectures that occur regularly in the adjacent auditorium. In order to maintain our good relationship with the sister arts housed therein, please ensure that cast, crew, and audience members are quiet and respectful both in and outside of the theater.

Senior projects in the Black Box must observe all other rules and regulations regarding safety, security, cleanliness, scheduling, and etiquette set forth in the TAPS Producer’s Packet and on Undergraduate Production’s website (up.yalecollege.yale.edu). Please familiarize yourselves, your cast, and crew before beginning your production work in the space. If these rules are not heeded, seniors risk academic probation, which, in extreme cases could lead to cancellation of the production.

As your Production Manager and Technical Director, we look forward to making your experience as a Producer a safe, creative, and fulfilling experience for you and your creative team. Don’t hesitate to ask any questions or raise any concerns along the way.

Nathan Roberts, Production Manager
Tom Delgado, Technical Director
The Role of the Producer (I’m the producer. What now?)

The producer is responsible for ensuring that all production activities in the Black Box are conducted safely and properly. As producer, you will receive keys to the tool rooms and assume responsibility for the security of and access to the theater during the period of residence of the production. You will be responsible for ensuring that the theater is clean and orderly after each rehearsal, work period, performance and strike. Though you may perform a variety of roles on behalf of your production, you may not serve as producer concurrent with being the director.

Other Production Team Responsibilities

The Executive Producer: Senior Theater and Performance Studies majors function as executive producers of their own senior production projects. While the producer oversees the day-to-day running of production, the executive producer is responsible for its overall execution and general adherence to the policies set forth here and on the Undergraduate Production regulations website. In other words, the executive producer, while primarily engaged artistically, is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the producer performs his or her duties reliably and effectively.

The Director: The director, as head of artistic operations for the production, is responsible for ensuring that the Black Box is used safely and conscientiously by all actors, performers, production team members and technicians. The director assumes responsibility for proper use of the theater and its equipment, and for ensuring that no doors are propped, that no spaces outside the theater are used without prior permission, and that all staging is in compliance with UP regulations. The director may not assume these responsibilities concurrent with being the producer.

The Production Team may include the student technical director, scenic, lighting, costume, and sound designers, props master, stage manager or others designated by the producer and/or director. Each member of the production team is responsible for the individual aspects of their area of expertise. Production team members must accept responsibility for the safe and proper conduct of the technicians and other production staff working with them.

The Producing Organization: The Theater and Performance Studies program serves as the primary producing organization for all senior projects in Theater and Performance Studies. That said, a producing team may choose to mount their production as a collaboration between TAPS and an existing undergraduate organization. As the primary sponsoring organization, TAPS sets certain standards for the content of all publicity materials. These requirements are outlines in Appendix G: Publicity Requirements.
Senior Production Project Policies and Guidelines

Schedule and Supervision in the TAPS Black Box
Productions are typically allotted two or three-week residencies in the Black Box, but each producer’s work begins long before their residency begins. TAPS issues calendar guidelines for each production that define certain design and production deadlines. Producers are responsible for enforcing these deadlines and for facilitating the communication between production team members necessary to meet them. This includes but isn’t limited to scheduling and running regular production meetings. Each producer should feel free to adapt specific deadlines to the needs of their production, but any major changes must be in consultation with the Theater and Performance Studies Production Manager and Technical Director.

The TAPS TD will work with each producing team to set a specific load-in and tech schedule prior to the beginning of their residency, ensuring that sufficient time is allowed for build and load-in of technical elements, crew training, and fire safety protocols. Fire/safety inspections usually occur on the Wednesday afternoon prior to opening and must be attended by the producer and/or director. Once inspected, no new scenic or lighting elements may be added. Also, additional seating cannot be added after the inspection. Fire inspectors may inspect production events at any time, with or without notice, and may set regulations that are stricter than those expressed in relevant codes, policies and guidelines.

The TAPS TD, or person designated by them, must supervise the load-in, focus, performances (including invited dress rehearsals), and strike of all Theater and Performance Studies productions. Which specific activities require supervision are determined at the sole discretion of the TD, and this supervision must be scheduled in consultation with the TD. For more information about which activities require supervision, see Appendix B- Prohibited, Supervised and Unsupervised Activities.

Performances
Evening performances at the Black Box begin at 8pm, and matinee performances at 2pm. Changes or additions to performance dates and times must be approved by the TAPS Production Manager and TD before residency begins. Because all Theater and Performance Studies performances must be supervised, approval is dependent upon staff availability.

Strike/Load-Out
Strike will take place after the final performance (usually Saturday night), and must be completed by 1am. All members of the cast and production team must assist in the strike of the production. It is the responsibility of the producer to make sure that everyone is present and appropriately dressed. Producers are encouraged to recruit additional help in order to ensure timely completion, and should keep in mind that a new production may need to move in the following morning. Any strike activities not completed by 1am (e.g. props returns) should be completed the following day and with the approval of the incoming producing team.

Sharing the TAPS Black Box
The Black Box is a classroom as well as a theater. The reserved time for senior projects in the Black Box is 6pm to midnight on weekdays, and 8am to midnight on weekends. Additional time in the theater for daytime rehearsals or production work must be scheduled through the TAPS TD. Under no circumstances may rehearsals or technical work take place in any other part of 53 Wall Street, nor may furniture be moved either into or out of any other room in the building. Because of the theater’s adjacency to the auditorium which hosts frequent evening lectures and film screenings, production team members should be mindful of the noise they make at all times and should avoid gathering or socializing in hallways and common areas. During performances, the foyer doors leading to the auditorium must be kept closed.

Access to the TAPS Black Box
The building at 53 Wall Street is closed to the public except during events, so it’s essential that production teams obtain key card access for cast and crew for the residency period. Access may be arranged through Alana Conti, the Theater
and Performance Studies Program Administrator (alanaconti@yale.edu). In addition to the main doors, access should be requested for the rear (loading) door of the theater from the courtyard parking lot on Church Street. No student has access to the 53 Wall Street or theater after midnight.

**Tool Usage and Training**
Many tools available for use at the Black Box require training, documentation of training, and in some cases supervision. The use of personal tools is prohibited in all undergraduate theaters. See the UP Tools and Equipment regulations page and see Appendix B: Prohibited, Supervised, and Unsupervised Activities for full details.

**Stage Combat and Prop Weapons**
No use of prop weapons or staged combat is allowed in rehearsal or performance without the written permission of Undergraduate Production. Requests for the use of staged combat must be submitted by the CPA deadline at the beginning of the semester in which the production will occur. Requests for the use of stage weapons must be made to the UP at least 6 weeks prior to the first performance date. Both requests should be made using the UP’s Prop Weapon and Stage Combat webform. Once submitted, UP will determine whether the services of a professional fight director are required and available. All fights involving weapon-to-weapon contact require oversight by a professional fight director. If this oversight is unavailable, the TAPS PM or TD will act as fight adviser and must approve all choreography. The level of supervision required for the rehearsal of all fights will be at the discretion of the TAPS PM and TD. UP notifies Yale Police at least 24 hours in advance of any transportation of prop weapons between buildings, so advanced scheduling must be done ahead of weapons transport. The producer or other designated and approved individual (e.g. the stage manager) is responsible for thoroughly documenting the use of stage weapons during rehearsals and performances. Complete regulations on this topic may be found in the Prop Weapon and Stage Combat Policy on the UP website.

**Rehearsing Material with Sexual Content**
Yale College has specific guidelines concerning the rehearsal and performance of material with sexual content. These guidelines should be reviewed by all team members. If you have any questions about the guidelines, or whether they apply to material you are rehearsing, contact the TAPS TD and PM.

**Travel and Transportation**
Any undergraduate student planning to drive a rental vehicle, transport large and/or heavy items with any vehicle, or travel more than 15 miles from central campus in any vehicle must first complete the online UP Driver’s Form and Yale University Driver Awareness Training. Production-related travel outside of New Haven must be pre-approved by UP. Students applying for out-of-town travel must complete the UP-Travel Request Form. All forms and information can be found on the UP website. The relevant forms should be submitted at least one week prior to any planned travel.

**Non-Yale Participants**
Yale College students who have withdrawn, Yale College alumni, and other individuals with no current formal affiliation with Yale University may not participate in any undergraduate curricular activity without first signing a Guest Artist Contract or an assumption of risk form. The producer and/or director should consult with the TAPS PM and TD prior to inviting anyone without a current, formal, Yale College affiliation to participate in curricular production activity.

**Picture and Video Policy**
Contact the Production Manager for the current policies on photo or video documentation of your production. For productions of previously published work, additional licensing may be necessary.

**Notice Regarding Changes to the Policies and Guidelines**
The policies and guidelines governing use of the TAPS Black Box are subject to periodic review by Theater and Performance Studies and may change at any time. These changes may occur in response to the needs of the users or to global policy changes as set forth by the University.
The Theater and Performance Studies Road Map: A Guide to Producing for Theater and Performance Studies

A hyperlinked version of this Road Map may be found in the Road Maps section of the UP website (up.yalecollege.yale.edu).

The Senior Project in Theater and Performance Studies gives students an opportunity to engage with theater, dance, and performance studies as methods of research that are interdisciplinary in scope and global in perspective. Moving fluidly between creative and critical strategies, students will develop a sustained, in-depth inquiry over the course of one semester or year.

The senior project represents a culmination of study in the major, as well as a site for discovering and strengthening authorial voice across multiple mediums. Senior production projects are part of the Theater and Performance Studies curricular season, and are usually produced by junior TAPS majors.

As heads of their production teams, producers are expected to play a critical leadership role in ensuring that all students involved in production share responsibility for the safety of their designers, crew, cast, audience, and for the performance space itself. Producers should familiarize themselves with UP regulations governing production work, and should consider themselves responsible for upholding these requirements in all phases of the production process.

Follow this link to the Theater and Performance Studies Roadmap:
https://up.yalecollege.yale.edu/production-roadmap/theater-and-performance-studies-production-roadmap
Appendix A

53 Wall Street Security Awareness Guidelines

In an effort to preserve safety and security for all groups that access the meeting, production, and study spaces in the center we ask for your cooperation in following these guidelines:

1. Be aware that the emergency number on and off campus is 911. Calling this number will put the caller through to a triage operator who determines the nature of the emergency: medical, safety or fire. To access Yale Police directly dial 203-432-4400 or use the Yale LiveSafe app, available for download on the Public Safety website (https://your.yale.edu/community/public-safety).

2. Be aware of your surroundings. If you see any suspicious activity, call Yale Police right away.

3. 53 Wall Street is not a general access building. DO NOT PROP DOORS. Load-in and strike activities should be planned and staffed in a way that ensures that no door will ever have to be propped in order to complete a task.

4. Do not leave personal items unsecured. If you have valuables that you need to leave in the theater, talk to the Theater and Performance Studies TD about how to secure them.

5. Before finishing up a rehearsal, meeting, or performance, please be certain to check the area for valuables and check that all doors are closed and locked.

6. When leaving the theater, consider requesting an escort. You can do this by calling (203) 432-WALK, or by using the LiveSafe app. You can also call the nighttime shuttle at 203-432-6330, which is available beginning at 6:30 pm. These services are available 24 hours a day.

With your cooperation, 53 Wall Street will remain a valuable resource to our campus community.
Appendix B
Prohibited, Supervised, and Unsupervised Activities

General Safety Policies

- Students must wear hard hats, closed-toed shoes, and appropriate clothing for strike and load in, and appropriate PPE for construction work for all Theater and Performance Studies production work.
- Students and not allowed to use the ladders or scaffolding without completing the appropriate training sessions.
- STUDENTS MUST NEVER WORK ALONE IN THE THEATER.

Follow this link to Undergraduate Productions Regulations:
https://up.yalecollege.yale.edu/regulations/undergraduate-production-regulations

This list should not be considered all-inclusive. Contact the TAPS TD whenever you have questions about production regulations.
Appendix C

Production Calendar Deadlines
(Producer-specific duties in italics)

Beginning of semester:
Meet with Tom & Nathan to discuss CPA Application
Fill out Weapons/Combat Request form if needed
6w Get contact sheet from stage manager (SM)
Send rehearsal report template to SM
Set time for regular production meetings
5w Prelim set/costume design due
Share contact sheet and calendar
First PROD MTG: practice design presentation
4w 491 design presentation
PROD MTG
3w Final set design due to Tom
PROD MTG
2w Prelim LX plot due to Tom
Schedule load-in meeting with Tom & designers
Designer run-through
PROD MTG
1w Final LX plot due to Tom
Send Cast/crew ID info to TA
All warehouse props tagged
PROD MTG

Residency:
Week 1
Sunday:    LX load-in (10am-6pm)
Mon-Fri:   Load-in (afternoons)
Saturday:  LX Focus/Spacing (10am-6pm)
SND/PROJ deadline
PROD MTG
Week 2
Sunday:    Tech Rehearsals begin(10am-6pm)
Mon-Wed:   Q2Q (6-11:30pm)
Thurs-Sat: Tech (6-10pm)
Week 3
Sun-Tues:  Dress rehearsals(6-10pm)
Wed:       Invited Dress 8pm
Thurs-Sat: Performances
Saturday:  Strike (10pm-1am)

Post-Residency:
Return all rentals
Issue reimbursements
Reconcile all accounts
Appendix D

Notes on Notes: How to Run a Production Meeting

As head of the production team, one of the producer’s most important responsibilities is to organize and lead regular production meetings during the pre-production/rehearsal phase, and daily meetings following tech and dress rehearsals (these meetings are more commonly referred to as “tech notes,” or around here, “midnight meetings”). Focused leadership and detailed notetaking at these meetings are critical for keeping the process on track and everyone on the same page.

Find a weekly time when everyone on your production team can meet. At minimum, the director, stage manager and all of your designers should be included, but depending on your production, you may also have a choreographer, dramaturg, music director, and others on your distribution list (also include the TAPS TD and PM). Once you move into tech, these weekly meetings will become tech notes following each tech rehearsal. Because the Black Box doors are automatically red-lit at midnight, make sure that these meetings are scheduled to begin no later than 11:30 pm.

Before each meeting, read the prior week’s rehearsal reports and take note of any issues that are likely to affect multiple departments. For example, if the director says in rehearsal that it’s important for the baby in the play to sound as if it’s really crying, this might require a collaboration between the sound and the props department- be prepared to facilitate that conversation. It’s a good idea to send an agenda to everyone before the first meeting, with guidelines about what kind of topics they should expect to cover.

Production meetings can be divided into three sections:

1. **All Staff-Issues** (5 minutes)
   Begin each meeting by addressing any issues that affect the group as a whole. This could be an announcement of any changes to staff or budget, or just a reminder of how much time is left before you have an audience.

2. **Departmental Progress Reports** (30-40 minutes)
   Ask for each department to give a brief progress report. This shouldn’t be a chronicle of everything they’ve done in the past week, but a general overview of their activities with emphasis on those that affect multiple departments. If the publicity materials require an actor to be photographed in costume, the costume designer should know when the photo shoot is going to be so they can finish that costume first. The order of departmental reports is flexible, but should always begin with the director. As leader of the meeting, it’s your job to announce which department is up next and keep the conversation focused. If there are issues that require longer one-on-one conversations between departments, encourage breakout meetings (i.e. follow-up conversations by individual departments after the general meeting).

   You should follow this same format for tech notes/midnight meetings, but expect to spend less time on each department. The purpose of tech notes is for the director to give notes to the individual departments, and for the departments to solve any conflicts that have become apparent during rehearsal.

   The following is a recommended order, with common talking points:
   a. **Director/Stage Manager**: Update Prod Team on rehearsal process and address any direct questions to department heads.
   b. **Sets/TD/Paints**: Design/build update: show any new research or renderings and note any setbacks that could require additional resources. Make sure to consider whether new scenic elements conflict with lighting, sound or projection. If prepping for load-in, make sure you have the necessary labor and that load-in activities don’t conflict with other departments.
c. **Props:** Design/build update: show any new research, photos or renderings; note any setbacks that could require additional resources. Consider whether actors will need practice handling any of the props that you intend to use.

d. **Costumes/Hair/Makeup:** Design/build update: show any new research, photos or renderings; note any setbacks that could require additional resources. Consider whether actors will need practice moving in any pieces (skirts, shoes) that you intend to use. Request time from Director/SM for actor fittings. If possible, bring fabric swatches for the lighting designer.

e. **Lighting:** Design update: show any new research or renderings. Make sure to consider whether any lighting elements are likely to conflict with sets, sound or projection. Consider how your color choices might affect the appearance of the clothing or set decoration. Note any practicals and consider what kinds of joint efforts might be necessary to realize them. If prepping for load-in, make sure you have the necessary labor and that load-in activities don’t conflict with other departments.

f. **Sound:** Design update: play new samples and note any setbacks that could require additional resources. Consider the logistics of any recording you plan to do, and make sure you have access to actors if you need them. If prepping for load-in, make sure you have the necessary labor and that load-in activities don’t conflict with other departments’ plans.

3. **Scheduling** (5 minutes)

   Following the departmental notes, remind everyone when the next meeting will be.

   During tech, this last section should be where the group agrees on time for work notes the following day. If Lighting or Projections needs “dark time,” if Sound needs “quiet time,” and if Sets needs to do construction, you’ll need to schedule separate blocks of time for each.

   Keep concise but detailed notes. It’s OK to take notes in shorthand, but translate them into full sentences before you send them, and make sure you include enough detail that a person not at the meeting would know what you’re talking about (you can’t always be sure about who’s going to ultimately be doing the work or when). For example, a note that says “Props - Martinelli’s darker” might make sense in the moment, but could be open to interpretation later. Assuming everybody knows what Martinelli’s is (which is a maybe), should the liquid be darker, or just the label? Or maybe the bottle itself needs to be opaque so the audience can’t see the liquid at all.

   Send your meeting notes on the same night that you have the meeting so that everyone has as much time as possible to react to them. You typically won’t have to send notes following midnight meetings, since the expectation is that each department is there to take their own, but you may have to relay information if any team members are absent.
Appendix E
Rehearsal Reports

The following is an example of a completed rehearsal report. It’s apparent from the level of detail that the stage manager is consciously looking for how activities in the rehearsal room could affect the work of the designers and production team.

The following page features a printable report.

| THE TITLE of YOUR PLAY |
| Rehearsal Report #1: Monday, September 1st, 2016 |
| Please respond to notes by emailing StageManagement@YourPlaysEmailAddress.com |

| Rehearsal Location/Time: 220 York, ballroom, 8-11:30pm |
| Next Rehearsal: Tuesday, 8-10pm, location TBD |

| Visitors: | Absent/Late/Accident/Illness: |
| The Executive Producer's Adviser | Your Lead Actor (10 min late - called) |
| The Sound Designer | Your Narrator (absent - excused) |

| General Notes: |
| 1. Today was our first day of table work and movement exercises. Tomorrow we will begin to work with music. |

| Work in the Room: |
| We began rehearsal with what will become a daily dance warm-up, led by Choreographer. We discussed the role that movement will have in our character development work, and what impact these exercises will have on the final blocking/choreography. We followed this with a Dramaturg-led discussion of the historical context surrounding the central events of Act 1, and touched on how each of the characters would respond to the changes they witness. We worked through the first pages of Act 1 slowly as we addressed those questions before picking up the pace in Scene 2. We reached page 36 with our table work and will continue on Wednesday evening. |

| Script Changes: |
| 1. Nothing at this time. |

| Scenic: |
| 1. Would it be possible to get a scaled ground plan so we can tape out the space by next Monday? |

| Props: |
| 1. Can we find brightly-colored ostrich quills to use as the pencils in Act 1, Scene 1 (p. 4). |

| Costumes: |
| 1. Thank you for the rehearsal skirts. |
| 2. Lead Actor will need a jacket with three pockets. |

| Lighting: |
| 1. Can we consider making the cyc green at the top of show instead of blue as discussed? |

| Sound: |
| 1. Will it be possible to play with foley effects as early as next week in rehearsal? |

| Music: |
| 1. The underscoring for scene 2 (p. 25) might want to be something more ethereal than we've been imagining. Can you come to the first part of rehearsal on Wednesday night to watch the dance warm-up? |

| Choreography: |
| 1. Nothing at this time. |

| Dramaturgy: |
| 1. Would it be possible for you to track down an assortment of dog portraits for Wednesday? |

| Health/Safety/Facilities: |
| 1. The first aid kit is out of ice packs. |

| Administration/Publicity: |
| 1. Graphic Designer: Let’s talk about dog portraits after Wednesday this week. |
| 2. Production Manager: Do we need to worry about rights/credit if we want to project Gone with the Wind footage at the end of Scene 1? |
| SHOW TITLE: |
| Rehearsal Report #_: Date: |
| Please respond to notes by emailing |

| Rehearsal Location/Time: |

| Next Rehearsal: |
| Visitors: | Absent/Late/Accident/Illness: |

| General Notes: |

| Work in the Room: |

| Script Changes: |

| Scenic: |

| Props: |

| Costumes: |

| Lighting: |

| Sound: |

| Music: |

| Choreography: |

| Dramaturgy: |

| Health/Safety/Facilities: |

| Administration/Publicity: |
TAPS Black Box Lighting & Sound Inventory
Performed by T. Delgado/August 2023

Follow this link to the TAPS Black Box Inventory (at the bottom of the page):

https://up.yalecollege.yale.edu/art-spaces/on-campus-performance-venues/whitney-theater
Appendix G

Publicity Requirements

Theater and Performance Studies sets standard requirements for the content of publicity materials for all TAPS sponsored events; templates and details are distributed to all TAPS curricular production teams at the beginning of each academic year. The TAPS PM must approve all publicity materials (e.g. programs and posters) before they are printed/published. Contact the TAPS PM with any questions.
Appendix H

Additional Resources

Undergraduate Production Equipment and Stage Weapon Inventory
Undergraduate Production keeps a small inventory of equipment that is available free of charge. For the complete list of items, see the page on the website:

https://up.yalecollege.yale.edu/resources/equipment-and-materials/inventory

Reservations may be made through the site and items may be checked out through the TAPS technical director.

For information about reserving music stands and lights, check for availability and reserve equipment on the UP Equipment Inventory page. Contact your Technical Director to schedule an equipment pick up and return once you have made a reservation.

For more information about borrowing stage weapons, email: kerry.cripe@yale.edu

Follow this link for the David Geffen School of Drama Inventory, Properties Warehouse Guide, and the Costume Collection Guide. This link includes important contact information and regulations:

https://up.yalecollege.yale.edu/resources/school-drama-inventory