Theatre & Dance

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Academic Programs

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The courses offered by the Theatre and Dance Department provide students with well-balanced programs of study, integrating practical production work with classes that examine the principles, theoretical aspects, and historical development of theatre and dance.

A full range of studio dance courses are offered that include ballet, modern, jazz, and ballroom. Composition and dance production are available, as well as courses designed for future teachers of dance. The department also provides general education and breadth courses in the areas of dance history and dance appreciation.

The department acts as a cultural focus for the campus and community. An annual dance concert is presented under the auspices of the Orchesis Dance Company and every spring a student-directed dance concert is produced. Each quarter the department presents three main-stage theatre productions. Recent titles include: Our Town, The Last Five Years, Lysistrata, Stop Kiss, The Tempest, Smash, Arabian Nights, Blood Wedding (Bodas de sangre), Animal Farm, Falsettos, 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, and Stupid F#@king Bird. In addition, the department also produces original works; sponsors guest lecturers and specialized workshops; and manages a program of student-directed works, field trips, and internships.

Undergraduate Programs

BA Theatre Arts

Students who major in Theatre Arts experience how live theatre explores important ideas, portrays the vastness of human emotions, and promotes the vitality of storytelling. The BA Theatre Arts Program at Cal Poly provides students with a foundation in the theory and practice of theatre, allowing them to participate in a comprehensive, hands-on training program that delivers a balanced and enriched knowledge of theatre arts: history, dramatic literature, playwriting, performing, production, directing, design, and administrative practices. Participation in main-stage productions, as actors and members of the artistic/production crew, is a key component of each student’s education. As a small program, the Theatre Arts B.A. allows for faculty to get to know students’ abilities and needs as individuals; promoting the selection of special projects, electives, and interests that mesh with their career ambitions. The program is delivered within a Liberal Arts framework, intended to advance the value of collaboration at all levels of study; designed to not only produce theatre artists with strong written and verbal skills, but also globally-minded citizens, prepared to enter into a variety of fields. And, as Theatre majors, students participate as members of a community which promotes the benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion – practicing and advocating openness, respect and fairness.

Dance Minor

The Dance Minor consists of 24 units designed to provide the student with a well-balanced program in the art and education of dance. The curriculum integrates critical thinking; creative investigation; scientific foundations; and significant historical and philosophical constructs of dance training, performance and pedagogy. Admission to the minor is contingent upon prior dance experience, a departmental interview and review. Students must have more than a 2.0 Cal Poly GPA.

Theatre Minor

The Theatre Minor is designed to provide a foundation of 12 required units in three major aspects of theatre: introduction/appreciation, design/production, and diversity. On top of that, the inclusion of 16 additional elective units allows for a degree of specialization in an area of the student’s choice. Students should discuss their interests with department faculty.

Admission to the minor is contingent upon a departmental interview and review. Students must have more than a 2.0 GPA.

DANC Courses

DANC 130. Pilates and Conditioning Fundamentals. 2 units
Introduction to the Pilates method and conditioning fundamentals. Exploration and practice of physical fitness, and the maintenance of a uniformly developed body. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 131. Beginning Ballet. 2 units
Fundamentals of ballet technique stressing alignment, turnout, basic positions and terminology. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 132. Beginning Modern Dance. 2 units
Fundamentals of modern technique stressing alignment, off-centered use of torso, floorwork, movement phrases, and improvisation exercises. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 133. Beginning Jazz Dance. 2 units
Introduction of jazz dance techniques stressing a variety of styles, alignment, isolation, polyrhythms, syncopation, improvisation and technical presentation of dance phrases. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 134. Beginning Ballroom Dance. 2 units
Focus on one or more selected ballroom dances including Cha-Cha, Foxtrot, Merengue, Rhumba, Samba, Swing, Tango, and/or Line Dances. Emphasis on alignment, etiquette, leading and following, history, performance techniques and presentation of dance phrases. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 135. International Folk Dance. 2 units
Introduction to international folk dances including round, longway, and square sets. Study of various dance steps, formation, positions, historical and cultural background. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.
DANC 210. Active Wellness. 4 units
2019-20 or later catalog: GE Area E
2017-19 or earlier catalog: GE Area D4
Investigation of health and wellness ideologies and techniques for
dancers and non-dancers through active participation in fitness
circuits and lecture. Elements of fitness, injury prevention, somatic
methodologies, anatomy, and body image will be presented and
discussed to help students maintain and cultivate optimum health now
and in the future. 3 lectures, 1 activity. Fulfills GE Area E (GE Area D4
for students on the 2017-19 or earlier catalogs).

DANC 221. Dance Appreciation. 4 units
2020-21 or later catalog: GE Area C1
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C3
Introductory survey of major experiments in dance. Examination of
history, philosophy, aesthetics, cultural context and criticism of diverse
dance genres. Focus on major western dance artists from the 19th
century to the present. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required.
Course may be offered in classroom-based or online format. 4 lectures.
Fulfills GE Area C1 (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier
catalogs).

DANC 231. Intermediate Ballet. 2 units
Prerequisite: Intermediate level experience as determined by instructor at
first class meeting.
Continuation of training in basic technical skills in ballet stressing
phrasing, performance, and more complex step patterns. Purchase
of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2
activities.

DANC 232. Intermediate Modern Dance. 2 units
Prerequisite: Intermediate level experience as determined by instructor at
first class meeting.
Continuing study of DANC 132 with emphasis on various movement
styles, phrasing, more complex step patterns, and performance. Purchase
of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2
activities.

DANC 233. Intermediate Jazz Dance. 2 units
Prerequisite: Intermediate level experience as determined by instructor at
first class meeting.
Continuation of DANC 133 with emphasis on more extensive movement
vocabulary. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit
limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 234. Intermediate Ballroom Dance. 2 units
Prerequisite: DANC 134 or intermediate level experience as determined by
instructor at first class meeting.
Continuation of DANC 134. Selected ballroom dances: cha cha, foxtrot,
merengue, rumba, swing, tango, hustle, paso doble, polka and samba.
Emphasis on variations, styles, and performance skill. Purchase of
concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2
activities.

DANC 270. Selected Topics. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: Open to undergraduate students and consent of instructor.
Directed group study of selected topics. The Class Schedule will list topic
selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 lectures.

DANC 280. Body Awareness and Expression. 4 units
Directed group study of movement techniques and exercises to facilitate
expressive physical performance. Body effectiveness, alignment and
conditioning practice integrated with creative exploration and movement
analysis of effort, spatial awareness and detailed body usage. 4 lectures.
Crosslisted as DANC/TH 280.

DANC 321. Cultural Influence on Dance in America. 4 units
2020-21 or later: Upper-Div GE Area C
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C4
USCP
Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with grades of C-
or better; one course in GE Area B4 with a grade of C- or better (GE Area
B1 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs); and completion of GE
Area C1 (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).
Multicultural approach to history of dance in America, with emphasis on
American Indian, West African, Caribbean, Mexican, European, and Asian
contributions and influences. Explores culture through dance. Purchase
of concert ticket(s) required. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Upper-Division C (GE
Area C4 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs); and USCP.

DANC 331. Advanced Ballet and Repertory. 2 units
Prerequisite: DANC 231 or intermediate level experience as determined by
instructor at first class meeting.
Advanced ballet technique and reconstruction of historical ballet
repertories from the romantic, classical, neoclassical, and modern
periods. Participation in dance performance of selected repertory.
Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6
units. 2 activities.

DANC 332. Contemporary Dance Repertory. 2 units
Prerequisite: Intermediate level experience as determined by instructor at
first class meeting.
Intermediate to advanced dance skills learned through the study and
performance of selected contemporary dance repertory. Explores
concepts in advanced performance technique through formal and
informal presentation in performance situations. Purchase of concert
ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 6 units. 2 activities.

DANC 340. Dance Composition. 4 units
Prerequisite: Intermediate level experience as determined by instructor at
first class meeting.
Principles of dance composition. Exploration of creative potential and
development of movement motifs through choreographic studies.
Preparation for informal public presentation of student generated
choreographic works. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required.
Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 lecture, 1 laboratory, 2 activities.

DANC 341. Dance Concert Practicum. 2 units
Prerequisite: consent of instructor.
Advanced practical application of choreography and dance concert
production. Production of the student-produced Spring Dance Concert
will be developed and executed. Investigation of complete choreographic
work via peer and faculty review. Total credit limited to 8 units. 2
laboratories.
DANC 345. Choreography/Workshop in Dance Concert Preparation. 4 units
Prerequisite: By audition only.
Workshop in concert preparation for major public dance production. Exploration and process of concert dance choreography. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 16 units. 4 laboratories.

DANC 346. Dance Production. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: One of the following: DANC 332, DANC 331, or DANC 345.
Directed production of annual Orchesis Dance Company Concert and other public performances. Attendance of professional dance concert(s) required. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. Total credit limited to 16 units. 1-4 laboratories.

DANC 381. Dance Teaching Methods for Dance Minors. 4 units
Prerequisite: Dance Minor.
Dance skills and techniques. Experience in selected dance forms. Rhythmic structure and analysis of dance steps. Includes introduction to dance pedagogy, curricular materials and evaluative procedures. Purchase of concert ticket(s) may be required. 2 lectures, 2 activities.

DANC 400. Special Problems. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor and department head.
Individual investigation, research and studies or survey of selected problems in dance and related areas. Total credit limited to 8 units with a maximum of 4 units per quarter.

DANC 430. Advanced Selected Techniques. 2 units
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.
Directed study of selected topics for advanced dance students. Focus on advanced level technique, style, concepts and choreography of classical and contemporary dance forms. The Class Schedule will list the topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 2 activities.

DANC 470. Selected Advanced Topics. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.
Directed study of selected topics for advanced dance students. The Class Schedule will list topics selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 lectures.

DANC 471. Selected Advanced Laboratory. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.
Directed group laboratory study of selected topics for dance students. The Class Schedule will list topics selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 laboratories.

TH Courses

TH 201. First Year Theatre Experience. 4 units
Development of methods and skills for Theatre Arts majors. Focus on the various roles involved in theatre-making through collaboration and experimentation. Introduction to the study and appreciation of Theatre; additional emphasis on practical and professional expectations, and career planning. Attendance at theatre performance(s) required. Not open to students with credit in TH 101. 4 lectures.

TH 210. Introduction to Theatre. 4 units
2020-21 or later catalog: GE Area C1
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C3
Overview of theatre principles and production practices, including terminology and conventions, methods, dramatic literature and performance, aesthetic appreciation, and technology. Emphasis on theatre as an integral cultural, social, and artistic entity. Attendance at theatre performance(s) required. Course may be offered in classroom-based or online format. Not open to students with credit in TH 201. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C1 (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).

TH 215. Verbatim Theatre. 4 units
Prerequisite: TH 220.
Focus on creation and performance of original devised work. Development of skills to research, collect, and produce content for use in performance. Emphasis on theatre to promote social change and awareness within a community about a particular topic or event. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 220. Acting I. 4 units
Prerequisite: TH 201 or TH 210.
Contemporary acting techniques focused on character building, objectives and tactics, with a focus on the development and implementation of various interactive methods of vocal work, images and actor resources. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 225. Costume Construction I. 4 units
Basic costume construction techniques used in the entertainment industry. Building of all costumes and special craft projects for main stage theatre productions. May not be taken concurrently with TH 230 or TH 330. 4 laboratories.

TH 227. Theatre History I. 4 units
2020-21 or later catalog: GE Area C1
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C3
Highlights of European theatrical history - Greeks, Romans, Medieval English and French theatre through the 17th century. Production methods, acting styles, playwriting theories and representative plays. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C1 (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).

TH 228. Theatre History II. 4 units
2020-21 or later catalog: GE Area C1
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C3
Highlights of European and American theatrical history from the 18th to 20th century. Production methods, acting styles, playwriting theories and representative plays. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Area C1 (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).

TH 230. Stagecraft I. 4 units
Basic stagecraft technique used in the entertainment industry. Construction and painting of scenery, building and gathering properties, hanging and focusing lighting instruments, and acting as running crew for department production each term. May not be taken concurrently with TH 225 or TH 325. 4 laboratories.
TH 235. Acting II. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 220.

Examination and application of key styles of acting, with specific attention paid toward the comparison and development of performance techniques and/or theories via scene work. Enhancement of foundational skills related to character, given circumstances, tactics, and objectives. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 240. Improvisational Theatre. 4 units  
Objectives and techniques of improvisational theatre. Participation in a series of exercises designed to develop skills in dramatic structure formatting, interactive problem solving, spontaneous scripting, dynamic communications, and applied performance styles. 2 lectures, 2 activities.

TH 245. Introduction to Stage Management. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210.

Basic stage managerial skills for organizing, preparing, and fulfilling theatrical productions from the inception through rehearsal and performance. 4 lectures.

TH 255. Technical Theatre Production. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 230.

Introduction to theatre production techniques and terminology, including tools and processes required to analyze, interpret, and construct scenery; concepts of lighting system and console programming; rigging practices. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 256. Technology in Theatrical Design. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 230.

Introduction to various technologies and current software used in theatrical stage design, including graphics editors; computer-aided design; visualizers and mapping; projection creation. Mixed digital media preparation and presentation. Individual and group assignments. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 260. Voice and Diction for the Stage. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 220.

Theory and practice in developing command of oral techniques for the stage including breath support, resonance and articulation. 4 lectures.

TH 265. Scenic Painting. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 230.

Introduction to scenic painting techniques used in theatre, including color mixing and media preparation, surface sizing and preparation, finishes, pattern or stencil work, and scaled transfer. Paint shop operations and functions. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 270. Stage Make-Up. 4 units  
Introduction to the art of theatrical make-up design and application. Techniques for producing character, old age, fantasy and special effects make-up. Demonstration and discussion of various design and application styles. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 275. Selected Topics. 1-4 units  
Prerequisite: Open to undergraduate students and consent of instructor.

Directed group study of selected topics. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 lectures.

TH 280. Body Awareness and Expression. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 220.

Directed group study of movement techniques and exercises to facilitate expressive physical performance. Body effectiveness, alignment and conditioning practice integrated with creative exploration and movement analysis of effort, spatial awareness and detailed body usage. 4 lectures. Crosslisted as DANC/TH 280.

TH 285. Internship. 1-4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 101; TH 210; and consent of instructor.

Part-time, supervised internship experience for Freshmen & Sophomore students in theatre or equivalent professionally related industry. Ability to work independently; strong verbal and written skills. Faculty approval of internship position required. Evaluations by supervisor and written reports by student required. 30 - 120 hours of work experience. Total credit limited to 4 units. Credit/ No credit grading only.

TH 290. Script Analysis. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210, TH 227 or TH 228.

Script analysis taught as an essential applied skill for actors, designers and directors. Students read a variety of plays and learn how to examine their structure, theme and context. 4 seminars.

TH 295. Foundations in Theatrical Design. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210.

Exploration of the fundamental principles and practices of designing for the stage. Emphasis placed upon the creative and collaborative process of theatre; development of the visual world of the play via language, color, drawing, analysis, and peer evaluation. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 305. Topics in Diversity on the American Stage. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210, TH 227, or TH 228.

Critical analysis of traditionally underrepresented groups in the American theatre, as writers, practitioners, story subjects. Investigation of dramatic literature and performance trends related to special interest topics. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Upper-Division C (GE Area C4 USCP

2020-21 or later: Upper-Div GE Area C  
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C4  
USCP

Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; one course in GE Area B4 with a grade of C- or better (GE Area B1 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs); and TH 210, TH 227, or TH 228 for Theatre majors or completion of GE Area C1 for all other majors (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).
TH 325. Costume Construction II. 4 units  
Prerequisite: Junior standing.

Specialized and advanced costume construction techniques used in the entertainment industry. Building of all costumes and special craft projects for main stage theatre productions. Total credit limited to 8 units. May not be taken concurrently with TH 230 or TH 330. 4 laboratories.

TH 330. Stagecraft II. 4 units  
Prerequisite: Junior standing.

Basic stagecraft technique used in the entertainment industry. Students construct and paint scenery, build and gather properties, hang and focus lighting instruments, and act as running crew for department production each term. Total credit limited to 8 units. May not be taken concurrently with TH 225 or TH 325. 4 laboratories.

TH 345. Mainstage Rehearsal and Performance. 4 units  
Prerequisite: By audition only.

Preparation of a play for quarterly public presentation, including acting, stage management, publicity, or serving as a key member of the artistic team. Total credit limited to 12 units. Major credit limited to 4 units; repeated units are free electives. 4 laboratories.

TH 350. Seminar in Playwriting. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210; TH 290; and completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better.

Examines dramatic structure, techniques of dialogue, and means of characterization in variety of plays. Relates dramatic writing to technical, design, directorial and acting demands. Compositions of monologues, scenes and one-act play; works read and critiqued in class. 4 seminars.

TH 355. Mainstage Production. 1-4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 225 or TH 230; and consent of instructor.

Preparation of a play for quarterly public presentation. Assignments and projects may center around any technical area of theatre, including, but not limited to, the following: Designers, Assistant Designers, Technicians, Crews and Crew Heads. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 laboratories.

TH 370. Costume History. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210.

Dress worn in Western society from Ancient Egypt through AD 2000. Silhouette; how, when, and why particular garments were worn; emphasis on social, political, and economic context. 4 lectures.

TH 380. Theatre for Young Audiences. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 210 or upper-division Liberal Studies, Child Development or Psychology course.

Practice of educational drama as applied to multidisciplinary curricula. Collaborate on story-based improvisation in areas that include language arts, social studies, geography and science with additional focus on examining emotional development and creativity. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 390. Global Theatre and Performance. 4 units  
2020-21 or later: Upper-Div GE Area C  
2019-20 or earlier catalog: GE Area C4  
Prerequisite: Junior standing; completion of GE Area A with grades of C- or better; one course in GE Area B4 with a grade of C- or better (GE Area B1 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs); and TH 210, TH 227, or TH 228 for Theatre majors or completion of GE Area C1 for all other majors (GE Area C3 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).  
Recommended: TH 210 for all other majors.

Investigation of non-American theatre and dramatic performance; emphasis on plays, playwrights, and movements as portraits of philosophical/national make-up. Topical emphasis focuses on the definition and development of a cultural identity via the context of historical and contemporary theatre practices. 4 lectures. Fulfills GE Upper-Division C (GE Area C4 for students on the 2019-20 or earlier catalogs).

TH 400. Special Problems for Advanced Undergraduates. 1-4 units  
Prerequisite: Consent of department head.

Individual investigation, research, or project centering around theatre. Total credit limited to 8 units.

TH 425. Acting III. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 235.

Advanced performance methodology. Focus on actor training in the theatre; analysis and professional skills; development approaches to material for the stage and auditioning. Enhancement of techniques related to monologues, scene study, and auditions. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 430. Scenic Design. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 290 and TH 295.

Scenic design process used in the entertainment industry, including collaboration, concept development, research, sketching, drafting, color rendering using a variety of media, 3D model building, and the presentation of design material. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 432. Costume Design. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 290 and TH 295.

Costume design process used in the entertainment industry, including collaboration, concept development, research, sketching, color rendering using a variety of media, and the presentation of design material. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 434. Lighting Design. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 290 and TH 295.

Lighting design process used in the entertainment industry, including collaboration, concept development, research, functional aspects of lighting equipment, CAD drafting, the development of production paperwork and presentation of design material. 3 lectures, 1 activity.

TH 450. Directing. 4 units  
Prerequisite: TH 290 and consent of instructor.

Principles, philosophies, analytical methods, business practices, organizational techniques and interpersonal strategies of directing for the stage. Experiential work includes hands-on, in-class exercises, as well as intensive outside class rehearsals. Culmination in a public production of student-directed one-act plays. 3 lectures, 1 activity.
TH 461. Senior Project Seminar. 4 units
Prerequisite: Senior standing and Theatre majors only.

Focus on post-graduate career planning options in theatre arts, including resume and portfolio building, preparation for professional work, graduate school and internships. A structure by which students design and submit their senior projects. 4 seminars.

TH 470. Selected Advanced Topics. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

Directed group study of selected topics for advanced students. Open to undergraduate and graduate students. The Class Schedule will list topic selected. Total credit limited to 8 units. 1 to 4 lectures.

TH 471. Selected Advanced Laboratory. 1-4 units
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

Directed group laboratory study of selected topics for theatre students. The Class Schedule will list topics selected. Total credit limited to 12 units. 1-4 laboratories.

TH 480. Advanced Internship. 4 units
CR/NC
Prerequisite: Junior standing with a minimum 3.0 GPA and consent of instructor.

Part-time, supervised internship experience in the entertainment or equivalent professional industry. Ability to work independently; strong verbal and written skills. Faculty approval required. Evaluations by internship supervisor and written reports by student required. 120 hours of work experience. Total credit limited to 8 units. Credit/No Credit grading.