

Where **Work** and **Play** are the same **Thing**  
New England College Theatre

New England College Theatre Department Handbook  
2021-2022



# NEC Theatre Dept. Handbook

## New England College Theatre Department Mission Statement

Theatre is not created in a vacuum. It is in its essence a reflection of the civic and natural worlds. Because it is created in the real world, it is also a social, political and ethical response to that world. Both in its design and its creation, the theatre artist has a civic, moral and ethical response to the world in which they live. Theatre moves beyond self-expression into a place where civic and environmental connections are the responsibility of the artist and their connection to those elements. Whether it is Shakespeare, Brecht or Tony Kushner, all of them explore the same fundamental question – What does it mean to be an engaged human in the world in which we live. The New England College Theatre Department is fearlessly committed to the examination of the human condition. We take a moral and ethical stand to change our world one audience at a time through works that are emotionally compelling, intellectually provocative and aesthetically engaging. We tell the stories absolutely need to be heard and take the risks that lead us and our audience to the common good. Consequently, this applies not only to the plays that we do, but to all of our course work as well. We teach our students that theatre is truly meaningful and can indeed change the world.

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Congratulations on your casting or crew assignment and welcome to the ensemble. We say ENSEMBLE because that is at the heart of how we operate. No one member of the organization is greater or of more importance than the others. It is our work TOGETHER and the support of the COMPANY that makes a production rise to the level of excellence that we expect. What you will find below is a list of expectations and things to remember that should help you be successful in this production. Please read through the material thoroughly. We expect that you will all work very diligently to follow the material enclosed and give the very best of yourself.

### Departmental Expectations:

- **VOCAL STRENGTH AND STAMINA**
  - Every word must be heard – all the way to the back row.
  - Diction must be clear, clean and sharp.
  - Your thought, drive and objective behind each line must be strong enough to carry each line to the final words (no dropping ends of sentences).
  - Mumbling is unacceptable.
  - All your hard work is for nothing if the audience can't HEAR YOU!

- **PHYSICALLITY**

- You will be asked to work on external body work to differentiate your characters if you are playing multiple roles.
- The expectation is that you work on a physical character as well as an emotional one.
- Actor Dancing – you know you do it. Stop it. Stay planted and root yourself in stillness.
- Gesturing – BIG and BOLD! Don't do a small gesture when a larger one will drive home your point. Gestures need to be lived in fully and embraced instead of feared. We won't allow you to look silly. Promise.
- Body Awareness – know when your butt is to the audience – cute as it is, it's not what they pay the big bucks to see. Have an awareness of where you are in space. and whether or not you are blocking something of importance. Every performance is blocked, but having an awareness of your own physical presence is crucial.
- Any haircuts, hair color, body modifications must be cleared by the director and costumer of each production.

- **FINAL SAY**

- Speak up! Share your ideas (*at an appropriate time – such as before or after the rehearsal or during office hours*). Ask questions – there are stupid questions, but better to ask one and have a solid answer than to venture forth into the unknown.
- We hope to work collaboratively in the development of characters and desire a production that pleases both parties – having said that – final say goes to the director.

- **CONFLICTS**

- They happen. We get it. At the time of auditions, you will be asked to provide us with a list of conflicts (class schedule, work study, organizational meetings, etc.). Only conflicts on the audition form will be honored and worked around.
- If an unforeseen conflict comes up, you are to notify your DIRECTOR and STAGE MANAGER immediately. Only those conflicts that are emergencies will be considered. Winning tickets to a concert, your Mom wanting you home early for break, taking a friend to the hospital etc. are not valid reasons to miss a rehearsal or performance.
- If you have an evening class – you must inform your professor at the start of the semester that you will need to miss 2 classes (tech week and the week prior) due to your academic commitment to the theatre program. They can contact us with questions. Save your absences so as to protect your grade.
- Illness: If you're taking care of yourself - hopefully you won't get sick...if you do – contact your stage manager and director immediately – don't pull the “I was waiting to see if I would get better so I didn't call until 10 minutes before rehearsal” baloney.

If you have head cold – we'll see you at rehearsal. If you're vomiting uncontrollably – let us know ASAP. **Due to COVID19, if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face. Stay in your living space and call Wellness immediately.**

- **BOOTH ASSIGNMENTS**

- The Stage Manager is the final say in the booth. While you need to be on top of your cues and should be very familiar with the script and the production, you don't execute cues unless you have a go from your Stage Manager.
- Intermission is not break time and run-around-in-the-lobby-visiting-with-audience time. It's get-ready-for-Act II time. Pee, drink something and get back in the booth.

- **BACKSTAGE POLICIES**

- All props will be put back on the prop table in the appropriate place by the performer who uses the prop at the end of each performance (this is not the responsibility of stage management)
- Performers will check their props and costume pieces each night before the performance.
- If a prop or costume is in need of repair – do not fix it yourself – please notify stage management immediately after the performance and they will send along the note from there and have it fixed.
- No phones, laptops or other electronic devices in the backstage or booth area. None. At all.
- Booth crew, running crew and Stage management need to dress appropriately. Black crew neck t-shirt (Department or Open Door shirts are preferable), black pants, closed toed shoes, no skirts, no heels or flip flops, no bare feet. Always consider that whatever you wear in the booth you should be able to climb to the catwalk if necessary.
- Performers and crew need to respond immediately to all stage management calls.
- Absolutely NO individuals backstage who are not involved directly with the production. This means at ANY TIME. Rehearsals, before show, After show. Doesn't matter.
- The Stage Manager will post a sign in sheet for every performance on the call board located by the dressing rooms - it is your responsibility to sign in for every rehearsal and performance.
- Please let the stage manager or the assistant stage manager know if we are running low on anything in the make-up room.

- Actors are responsible for cleaning up their own dressing rooms each night after tech and performance. A cleaning schedule will be put together for each show and duties outlined therein.
  - Performers are responsible for the care of all costume items they use in a production – both during rehearsal and performance.
  - The stage manager, the backstage running crew and the costumer will **not** put away costumes either after rehearsal or performance.
  - This means all costume items are to be properly put away **in the dressing rooms** after each rehearsal or performance. Costumes **are not** to be left in **any** of the backstage areas – they must be returned to dressing rooms –this will ensure that the costume crew can locate and monitor the condition of all costumes during the rehearsal and performance process.
  - If you have to preset costumes for quick changes, do so before each performance as part of your normal pre-show preparation.
  - All costume items like shirts, jackets, coats, vests, blouses, skirts and dresses should be hung neatly and separately on the hangers provided by the costumer.
  - Footwear and hats should be placed neatly on counters in dressing rooms near corresponding costumes.
  - Prior to dress rehearsals for each production the costumer will provide all actors with specific care instructions for their costumes.
  - If you notice some damage to a costume or have a maintenance issue with a costume communicate the issue/damage to the **stage manager**, he or she will then communicate the note to the costumer. Unless it is an emergency during a show, **do not** attempt to repair the costume yourself.
  - While in costume you should refrain from eating and drinking anything that could potentially stain a costume. Water is the safest thing to consume – if you need to eat put something on over the costume – a smock or a shirt that will protect the costume. No smoking in costume - if you smoke, do so before you get in costume. Common sense is the key here – don't be the knucklehead that has to go to the stage manager and explain why there is a burn hole in a necktie, or a mustard stain on a shirt, or soda spilled onto a pair of pants.
  - A good idea would be for all actors to bring to the theatre, an old oversized shirt that they can wear while getting into makeup and then throw on over a costume as needed. Actors may leave this shirt in their dressing rooms at their station.
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- **Typical Schedule: What follows is a typical call for tech week/production nights**
    - 7:30 go time
    - 7:00 Pre-show/House open
    - 6:45 Green Room
    - 5:30 All pre-show checks – Dimmers, props, audio etc...
    - 5:30 Actor call and sign in
    - 5:00 Booth crew called – Deck swept and washed

- **THE HOUNDING LIST**

- We expect you to treat your peers and your director with respect and courtesy – no matter how late the night or how tired we may be.
- We expect you to be on time and WARMED UP for all rehearsals and performances. Go time for rehearsal is WHEN WE BEGIN, not when we walk in the door. Plan accordingly. If you're not 10 minutes early – you're late.
- Be committed. Be bold. Be passionate. Make choices.
- LEAVE YOUR BAGGAGE AT THE DOOR. You will be better for it. It's not always an easy thing to do, but it can be done. Life happens – yes – we know that. But to bring it into rehearsal or a performance is to profoundly affect every actor in the room and the production as a whole. This is our space: a get-away from everything that bothers and frustrates us – do not infect that precious space with drama, negativity or cruelty – it will not be tolerated. This is a big one folks. Pay attention.
- Give 100% every time you step on the stage – even when you're tired – even when you're sick. There is no room for laziness in the theatre.
- Bad shows happen – don't let it make you feel a failure – just make adjustments to make the next one better.
- Don't blame the audience. They may be incredible, they may be quiet, they may be awful – but they came to see YOU. Therefore, regardless of how they behave or engage in the show – you will give them the show we created at its highest level.
- Take care of yourself. Don't abuse your voice or body in ways that will limit your ability to perform at the level we expect. Make smart choices. Your body is the only instrument you have – put it through too much and you will end up weak and sick when you need to be healthy and strong.
- You do NOT have to be friends with everyone in the department. You DO have to treat them all with respect and courtesy.
- This is our home. Our space. Our universe. Respect that work that we do and the space that we do it in...
- WE WILL HOUND YOU ON ALL OF THIS – thus the title of the list.

## **OTHER POLICIES:**

### **Communication Policy:**

- Download the app GROUPME. There will be a GroupMe chat for the entire department. When a department email goes out, you will be notified on GroupMe. A

GroupMe chat will also be created for each production after casting is completed. All rehearsal calls will be sent out on that chat group.

- Department emails will be sent through your **nec.edu** email address ONLY. We do not use any personal email addresses – CHECK IT DAILY, if not twice daily.
- All department emails should be replied to with a simple “Thank You” email so that we know you’ve received the information sent.
- The Department contact sheet as well as this handbook and others will be placed in a NEC Theatre Microsoft Team. Every important document will be consolidated into that Team. [Click here to be directed to the NEC Team](#)
- If you are to be late or miss rehearsal for any reason, you must **call** (not text) the Stage Manager or Director only. Do not pass messages along via fellow actors or technicians at any time. The Stage Manager and Director are the only two who should receive this information. If you are unable for reason of emergency to be at rehearsal or a work call, your priority is to let Alex or Glenn or the guest director know as soon as humanly possible. Emergencies are stressful, but they are made more so by not letting people know where you are.

#### **Department Call Board:**

- All pertinent theatre announcements will be posted on the theatre call board. The call board is located by the dressing rooms in Putnam.
- Production calendars will be posted and emailed.
- Weekly schedules will be posted and sent on GroupMe.
- Daily calls will be sent on GroupMe.

#### **Rehearsal Calls/Production Expectations:**

- Rehearsal calls will be sent on Group Me the evening before rehearsal. It is YOUR responsibility to check it **daily**.
- Typically, all rehearsal calls for Putnam productions (prior to production week) will occur Monday through Thursday between 6:00 and 10:00pm. Note: Every effort should be made to avoid these times with each semester schedule.
- All theatre majors and minors are expected to be on campus during production week and tech weekend regardless of their role in the production.
- All theatre majors/minors and students enrolled in theatre courses are required to see all department productions.
- All theatre majors and minors are required to participate in some way in every department production.

#### **Respect for Space:**

- Pick up all personal trash and be sure not to leave personal possessions behind.
- No street shoes in the theatre in wet or snowy weather – leave shoes at the door - and if needed, bring a second pair of shoes for rehearsal.

- A second pair of “clean” shoes may be left in the stairwell near the stage door of the theatre.

### **Production Work:**

- Options for production assignments are as follows: Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Manager, Sound board operator, Light board operator, Properties, Costumes, Make-up, Set crew, Light crew, Sound crew, House Management, Box office, Ushers, Running Crew, Dramaturge. Further opportunities in design, Assistant Director, etc. are available to upperclassmen who have earned those opportunities.

### **Ticket information:**

- All performers and crew MUST reserve tickets through the box office. The link to purchase tickets online (as well as choose seating) can be found on [www.nectheatre.com](http://www.nectheatre.com)
- Any questions about tickets can be directed to [nectheatre@nec.edu](mailto:nectheatre@nec.edu) or 428-2382.
- DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS! Just because you are involved in the show does not mean we can fit in your reservations at the last moment. Please encourage your family and friends to do so as well.
- Please reserve your tickets in advance and **have your family and friends reserve their own tickets.**
  
- Every actor and crew member is entitled to TWO (2) complementary tickets to the production they are working on. At the top of the production, a coupon code will be given to cast members that can be used to reserve comp tickets.
- Family/Friends/Professors/Staff Members – take responsibility for getting butts in seats! Share on social media and provide ticket links!
- You are all expected to contribute names, addresses and emails of friends and family to our mailing list. This can be added online, and in person at the box office and via email to [nectheatre@nec.edu](mailto:nectheatre@nec.edu).

### **Other Expectations:**

- Phones are to be left off and at the door of all theatre classrooms and rehearsals spaces. They will be there for you when you get out of class or rehearsal. This includes all theatre spaces and classrooms
- Peer Leaders, RAs and club leaders are expected to coordinate their calendars with any duty schedules to ensure attendance at important department events.

**Reminder: Failure to meet these expectations may preclude you from further casting and crew assignments or may result in your removal from a production.**