

Dr. Sam Nelson

Theatre Generalist | Scholar | Teacher | Artist
Curriculum Vitae

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OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

2025 – Present

THR 3510-02 – Theatre History: Early Humanity to 19th Century

Survey of theatre history from classical Greece to 1900, examining dramatic forms, performance practices, theatre spaces, and major practitioners across world cultures. Emphasizes theatre's role in shaping cultural meaning, social values, and ideas about community, identity, and transformation, while connecting historical practices to contemporary performance.

THR 3450 – Sound Design

This course explores the process of sound design for theatre from analysis to performance. Students develop skills in research, critical listening, audio editing, and cue construction while creating a cohesive sound design for a staged work. Emphasis is placed on how sound functions dramaturgically, shaping meaning and audience perception. Students produce a complete design portfolio including soundscapes, cue sheets, system diagrams, and a final design statement.

THR 1140 – Sound Technologies

This course introduces the principles and practices of sound for live performance and recorded media. Students learn how sound behaves as both a physical phenomenon and a technical signal, and how audio systems shape what audiences hear. Through a combination of hands-on work and critical listening, students develop the ability to set up, operate, and troubleshoot sound systems while understanding how technical decisions influence clarity, balance, and perception. Emphasis is placed on signal flow, system design, and the relationship between sound, space, and audience experience.

Education

PhD – Interdisciplinary Arts (April 2025)

Scholar/Artist Track: Theatre & Performance Studies
Ohio University

Dissertation: "A Critique of Truth-Centered Rhetoric in American Acting and New Language for Embodied Imagery" (*Defended April 25, 2025*)

Committee: Daniel Dennis, Garrett Field, Matthew Cornish (Chair)

Master of Fine Arts – Acting (May 2021)

The University of Alabama

Bachelor of Arts – Theatre Arts (May 2017)

Furman University

Research & Teaching Interests

Theatre history & historiography, actor training & pedagogy, history of acting theory, dramatic literature and script analysis, practical dramaturgy, voice and movement training, practice as research, Shakespeare, Commedia dell'Arte, mask performance and construction, aesthetics and philosophy of art, global and postcolonial theatre, feminist theatre, applied theatre, and sound design and production technologies.

OHIO UNIVERSITY

PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

2023 – 2025

THAR 4720 – Global Theories of Performance (Forms of Drama)

Aiming to expand horizons beyond the West, this seminar examines key theoretical questions and debates from modern and contemporary Southern Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Oceania, Latin America, East Asia, the Caribbean, and India. The course also incorporates readings in dramatic literature to present these theories in their respective historical, cultural, and theatrical contexts. Issues in postcolonialism, aesthetics, globalization, and interculturalism are also explored in this class in search of a genuinely global understanding of theatre and performance.

THAR 4720 – Acting as Research: Embodied Imagination (Forms of Drama)

This practice-based seminar investigates contemporary understandings and assumptions of the actor's art through methods of Practice as Research. In applying an interdisciplinary approach, the perspectives explored belong to theorists from theater studies, literature, philosophy, and aesthetics. Students learn to raise new critical questions in acting, why it is important to do so, and how social, cultural, and aesthetic ideas shape acting practice. The course culminates with a final performance of scene and/or monologue work that demonstrates how critical inquiry informs students' personal approaches to dramatic acting.

THAR 4710 - History of Acting Theory (Seminar in Theatre History and Drama)

This seminar investigates the development of ideas concerning acting from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe, spanning from antiquity to the present day. Students work towards developing a systematic understanding of the concepts and issues that informed ideas of what acting is, has been, or should be.

THAR 4700/5700 – Practicum in Dramaturgy

Practical experience as a dramaturg on School of Theater productions, including historical, textual, and biographical research, as well as audience outreach activities.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

2018 – 2021

TH 141 – Acting I

This course explores the study and practice of basic principles of realistic acting, voice, and movement as outlined by Stanislavski and other theatre methodologies. Work centers on modern scene study, exercises, literature, and observation.

TH 115 – Beginning Acting (for Non-Majors)

Training in the basic elements of the actor's craft. This class explores the study and practice of basic principles of realistic acting, centering on modern scene study, exercises, and observation.

TH 114 – Introduction to Theatre (Online & In-Person)

Students are guided through a survey of plays, stage histories, practitioners, dramatic structure, and production styles to develop an appreciation for theatre arts. This course also provides strategies for critical assessment as well as an introductory overview of acting, directing, design, and the technical elements of production.

GUEST LECTURER

Ohio University: 2021 – 2025

THAR 2710 – Theatre and Performance History I
Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, *El Divino Narciso*

THAR 2710 – Theatre and Performance History I
The *Commedia dell'Arte*: Style, Masks, and Characters

THAR 2711 – Theatre and Performance History II
Dario Fo's Italian Marxist Theatre

THAR 2711 – Theatre and Performance History II
Theories of Acting in the Age of Enlightenment

FAR 1500 – Viewing the Arts
Acting and Viewing Acting Performances

The University of Alabama: 2018 – 2022

TH 422 – Careers in Professional Theatre
Working as a Scholar/Artist – Merging Scholarship with Creation, Theory with Practice

TH 452 – Theatre History II
The African Grove Theatre Company
Romanticism, Melodrama, & the Well-Made Play
The History and Legacy of American Minstrelsy
Theatre of Cruelty, *Jet of Blood*

TH 114 – Introduction to Theatre
Theatre's Origins
Ancient Greek & Roman Theatre
Medieval European Drama
The *Commedia dell'Arte* & The Italian Renaissance
Kathakali & Ancient Sanskrit Drama in India
Chinese Xiqu

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT

Ohio University: 2021 – 2025

THAR 2710 – Theatre and Performance History I
Primary Instructor: Dr. Shane Breaux
Primary Instructor: Dr. Matthew Cornish

THAR 2711 – Theatre and Performance History II
Primary Instructor: Dr. Shane Breaux

The University of Alabama: 2018 – 2022

TH 452 – Theatre History II
Primary Instructor: Dr. Steve Burch

TH 445 – Acting V: Acting Shakespeare
Primary Instructor: Seth Panitch

TH 442 – Careers in Professional Theatre
Primary Instructor: Seth Panitch

ACTING COACHING

2018 – Present

Audition and Repertoire Coaching

Working with professional, student, and amateur actors, focusing on intention, emotion, impulsivity, and connection. Guiding audition monologue repertoire selection.

Showcase Scene Coaching

Preparing high school and college seniors for acting showcase events through coaching of individual scenes aimed at best highlighting individual strengths.

Private Dialect Coaching

Working with professional and amateur actors, focusing on shaping the voice and speech of a character by exploring the phonetics of stage dialects through drills and exercises.

Working with ESL students to strengthen their General American dialects for class presentations and other public speaking events.

HONORS AND AWARDS

SheNYC Summer Theatre Festival

Best Overall Production for *Sheepwell* by Margaret Caterisano (2022)

Ohio University

Graduate Teaching Assistantship (2021 – 2025)

The University of Alabama

Graduate Teaching Assistantship (2018 – 2021)

Marian Galloway Award for Distinguished Graduate Acting (2019)

Furman University

James B. Duke Scholarship Recipient (2013 – 2017)

MASTERCLASS INSTRUCTOR

Ohio University: 2022

Introductory Physical and Character Half-Mask Performance Techniques

Mill Mountain Theatre: 2022

Mask Design and Construction Techniques

PROFESSIONAL ACTING CREDITS

<i>Sheepwell</i>	Thomas
<i>Miss Julie</i>	Jean
<i>Bull</i>	Tony
<i>Hamlet</i>	Grave Digger, et al.
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Paris
<i>Footloose</i>	Coach Dunbar
<i>Ring of Fire: Music of Johnny Cash</i>	Sam
<i>Hatfields and McCoys</i>	Tolbert McCoy
<i>The Addams Family</i>	Ensemble

ACADEMIC ACTING CREDITS

<i>See Rock City</i>	Dempsey
<i>John Proctor is the Villain</i>	Mr. Smith
<i>Antigone</i>	Creon
<i>Shooting Star</i>	West
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Antonio
<i>Legally Blonde</i>	Callahan
<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>	Major-General Stanley

SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS AND SERVICE

Ping Institute for the Humanities

Served as a panelist for a discussion of Shakespeare's dramaturgy for high school drama teachers (2023)

Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine

Performed in scenarios for admissions interviewer implicit bias training (2022)

The Mid-America Theatre Conference

"Counter-Hegemonic Interpretation: Dario Fo's Characterization and Satire Through Intersemiotic Translation" (2022)

The Southeastern Universities Graduate Research Symposium

"The Commedia dell'Arte as a Weapon of Cultural Warfare" (2020)

The Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference

Adjudicated four undergraduate research presentations (2019)

Broomstick Theatre Co. (NYC)	Margaret Caterisano
Guerrilla Shakespeare Co. (SC)	Caroline Davis
Guerrilla Shakespeare Co. (SC)	Robert Fuson
Guerrilla Shakespeare Co. (SC)	Crystal Stewart
Guerrilla Shakespeare Co. (SC)	Robert Fuson
Theatre West Virginia	Ashley Meyer
Theatre West Virginia	Neil David Seibel
Theatre West Virginia	Jason Adkins
Theatre West Virginia	Dan Henthorn

Ohio University Theatre	Steven Strafford
Ohio University Theatre	Sarah Curtis
University of Alabama Theatre	Matt Davis
University of Alabama Theatre	Seth Panitch
University of Alabama Theatre	Reid Watson
University of Alabama Theatre	Stacy Alley
University of Alabama Theatre	Alex Ates

ACADEMIC ACTING CREDITS CONT.

<i>The River</i>	The Man	University of Alabama Theatre	Reid Watson
<i>Gnit</i>	Moynihan, et al.	University of Alabama Theatre	Alex Ates
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Falstaff	University of Alabama Theatre	Seth Panitch
<i>The Christians</i>	Elder Jay	University of Alabama Theatre	Alex Ates
<i>Danny and the Deep Blue Sea</i>	Danny	Furman University Theatre	Carol Sutton
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Lord Capulet	Furman University Theatre	Maegan Azar
<i>Kappa Kappa Scream</i>	Chet	Furman University Theatre	Jay Oney
<i>The Birthday Party</i>	McCann	Furman University Theatre	Rhett Bryson
<i>Arcadia</i>	Hannah Jarvis	Furman University Theatre	Jay Oney
<i>Rumors</i>	Lenny Ganz	Furman University Theatre	Carol Sutton
<i>The Pillowman</i>	Katurian	Furman University Theatre	Robert Fuson
<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	Macheath	Furman University Theatre	Maegan Azar
<i>The Imaginary Invalid</i>	Thomas Diafoirus	Furman University Theatre	Rhett Bryson
<i>These Shining Lives</i>	Tom	Furman University Theatre	Maegan Azar
<i>Pomp & Circumstance</i>	Wyatt	Furman University Theatre	Jay Oney
<i>Gruesome Playground Injuries</i>	Doug	Furman University Theatre	Callie Nestleroth

NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT/STAGED READINGS

Literary Manager & Founding Member, Broomstick Theatre Co. NYC (2022 – Present)

Evaluate new plays, provide dramaturgical feedback, and collaborate on artistic programming and new-play development. Help advance the company's mission of supporting new and emerging artists through readings, workshops, and production opportunities.

<i>The Model Congressman</i>	(Dramaturg)	Ohio University Theatre	Steven Strafford
<i>Life After Exorcism</i>	Jason	Guerrilla Shakespeare Co. (SC)	Robert Fuson
<i>Though the Heavens May Fall</i>	Judge Horton	Dr. Steven Burch	Steven Burch
<i>A Christmas Memory</i>	Narrator	Tuscaloosa Public Library	Alex Ates
<i>Armed</i> (Devised)	Sam	GLOW Lyric Theatre	Jenna Tamisiea
<i>Death at Downton</i>	Robert Squally	Furman University Theatre	Randall David Cook
<i>In a Town Near Faith</i>	Hank	Furman University Theatre	Randall David Cook

DIRECTING CREDITS

<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Asst. Director, Dramaturg, Text Coach	Tantrum Theater	2023
<i>Squeakers</i> *World Premiere	Director	Ohio University Theatre	2023
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Asst. Director, Text Coach	Ohio University Theatre	2022
<i>... "Iron" Mike Malloy</i> *World Premiere	Director	Ohio University Theatre	2022
<i>Miss Samantha</i> (Audio Play)	Director	The Flourish	2020

DIALECT COACHING CREDITS

<i>Tipping the Velvet</i>	Standard British (RP) & Cockney	Ohio University Theater	Caitlin Lopez
<i>John Proctor is the Villain</i>	American Southern	Ohio University Theatre	Sarah Curtis

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Lighting & Sound Supervisor, Otterbein University (2025 – Present)

Train and mentor students in lighting, sound technology, and sound design while overseeing the safe operation and maintenance of departmental lighting and audio systems. Manage and supervise technical execution for departmental productions, university events, and external rentals. Serve as sound designer for mainstage musicals during the academic year and productions in the university's professional summer theatre season.

<i>Rock of Ages</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	David Caldwell
<i>Curtains</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	Lenny Leibowitz
<i>My Way: A Musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein Summer Theatre	Mark Mineart
<i>Lost in Yonkers</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein Summer Theatre	Lenny Leibowitz
<i>She Loves Me</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein Summer Theatre	Lenny Leibowitz
<i>Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	Lenny Leibowitz
<i>All My Sons</i>	Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	Mark Mineart
<i>Dance 2025: Maty, Victor & the Monster</i>	Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	Stella Hiatt Kane
<i>Trojan Women</i>	Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	Janetta Davis & Sonda Staley
<i>Urinetown</i>	Sound Designer, Lighting & Sound Supervisor	Otterbein University Theatre & Dance	Melissa Lusher

Technical Director and Production Manager, Tryon Fine Arts Center (2018)

Edwin McCain, Indie Rock Concert	Lighting Designer, Stage Manager	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
Christopher Titus's <i>Amerigeddon</i> , Stand-up Comedy Show	Lighting Designer, Stage Manager	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
Destiny Stone's <i>Nina Now</i> , Nina Simone Tribute Concert	Lighting Designer, Sound Engineer, Stage Manager	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
<i>Best of Enemies</i> (Play)	Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Stage Manager	Tryon Fine Arts Center	Robin Edgar

<i>Pure Poetry, Poetry Readings Featuring Various Artists</i>	Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
<i>John Lennon, the Mobster and the Lawyer</i>	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Dark Horse Theatre Project	
Dan Keller Jazz Trio	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
<i>Zoe & Cloyd, Americana Duo</i>	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
William Florian, Country Soloist	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
<i>Brother Bluebird, Folk Duo</i>	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
Fassoux Mclean & Brandon Turner, Country Duo	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
Lightwire Theatre's <i>Moon Mouse: A Space Odyssey</i>	Stage Manager, Technical Director	Super Saturday Children's Theatre Festival	
<i>Rhythm Dances from Around the World</i>	Stage Manager, Technical Director	Super Saturday Children's Theatre Festival	
<i>Windsync, Wind Quintet</i>	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Concert Association	
Benefit Variety Show	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Foothills Parkinson's Support Group	
Polk County Early College Graduation Ceremony	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Polk County Public Schools	
<i>Celebrating Nina Simone, Tribute Performances by Various Artists</i>	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Fine Arts Center	
<i>James and the Giant Peach</i>	Lighting Designer, Technical Director	Tryon Little Theatre	Chris Tinkle

Technical Theatre Internship Supervisor, Tryon Fine Arts Center (2018)

Provided supervision, guidance, and feedback for Technical Theatre interns. Delegated meaningful work assignments to help foster learning and skill development.

The Flourish: A BIPOC Student Arts Organization (2020)

<i>Return Sender Return</i> (Audio Play)	Audio Editor Audio Engineer	The Flourish	Christian Tripp
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Furman University (2014-2017)

2014-2017 Season Productions	Costume Shop Assistant	Furman University Theatre	Margaret Caterisano
<i>The Woman of Lockerbie</i>	Stage Manager	Furman University Theatre	Jayce Tromsness
<i>Durang/ Durang</i>	Master Electrician	Furman University Theatre	Rhett Bryson
<i>Hair</i>	Publicity Crew Head	Furman University Theatre	Maegan Azar
<i>God of Carnage</i>	Assistant Stage Manager	Furman University Theatre	Rhett Bryson

EDUCATION – COURSES COMPLETED

PhD – Interdisciplinary Arts

Ohio University

Performance of Black Thought	Dr. J� Hooper
Dramaturgies of Comedy	Dr. Shane Breaux
Theatre and Ethics	Dr. Matthew Cornish
Dance Ethnography	Dr. Zelma Badu-Young
Dramaturgy	Tyler Adams
Directing	Dr. Daniel Dennis
Chekhov Technique	David Haugen
Suzuki Method	Dr. Daniel Dennis
Viewpoints	Dr. Daniel Dennis
Stage Combat	Brian Evans
Unarmed & Single Sword	
History of Aesthetics	Dr. Vladimir Marchenkov
Contemporary Aesthetics	Dr. Vladimir Marchenkov
Critical Theory and the Arts	Dr. Erin Schlumpf
Transnational and Global Theories	Dr. Daniel Spencer
Text, Translation, and the Arts	Dr. Charles Buchanan, Dr. Garrett Field
Feminism and the Arts	Dr. Charles Buchanan, Dr. Erin Schlumpf
Research and Writing Skills	Dr. Charles Buchanan
Pedagogy and the Arts	Dr. Andrea Frohne

MFA – Acting

The University of Alabama

Acting Shakespeare	Seth Panitch
Graduate Acting Studio – Scene Study	Seth Panitch
Acting for the Camera	Seth Panitch
Styles of Shaw, Ibsen, & Chekhov	Seth Panitch
Stand-up Comedy,	
Styles of Coward, & Wilde	Seth Panitch
Alexander Technique	Kelley Schoger
Styles of Restoration Comedy	Allison Hetzel
Rodenburg & Fitzmaurice Vocal Training	Allison Hetzel
Dialects & Accents	Allison Hetzel
Acting Pedagogy	Allison Hetzel
Private and Studio Singing Training	Dr. William Martin
Graduate Theatre History I	Dr. Steve Burch
Graduate Theatre History II	Dr. Steve Burch
Dramatic Theory & Criticism	Dr. Steve Burch
Playwriting	Dr. Steve Burch
Script Analysis	Dr. Steve Burch

BA – Theatre ArtsFurman University

Acting I	Maegan Azar
Acting II: Characterization	Maegan Azar
Acting III: Period Styles	Maegan Azar
Movement for the Actor Laban & Suzuki	Maegan Azar
Advanced Movement Techniques Commedia dell'Arte, Mask, Clowning	Maegan Azar
Directing	Maegan Azar
Playwriting	Randall David Cook
Theatre History I	Dr. Jay Oney
Theatre History II	Dr. Jay Oney
Stage Makeup	Margaret Caterisano
Costume Crafts	Margaret Caterisano
Modern British & American Drama	Margaret Caterisano
Fashion History for Costume Design	Margaret Caterisano
Advanced Rendering	Will Lowry
Lighting Design	Rhett Bryson
Stage Craft	Rhett Bryson
Private Singing Coaching	Gail Schoonmaker