The B.F.A. in acting is an intensive, individualized actor training program that involves both U of M faculty and professional artistic staff from the Guthrie Theater to provide students with the physical, vocal, emotional, and intellectual skills necessary to succeed as working performance artists. With an innovative liberal arts curriculum, you’ll develop mind, body, and spirit as an actor, artist, and scholar. The degree is intended to prepare students for professional employment or entry into advanced education at a conservatory and/or graduate school.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study acting at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts highlight the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.
An Academic Program with Conservatory Rigor

Students of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program receive nationally-ranked training among one of the country’s most established arts communities. The program aims to train actors with an emphasis on excellence and individuality while providing an inspirational foundation for each student’s life-long journey of learning and artistic expression.

Learn more about our undergraduate program.

Student Experiences

Study Abroad: Get Ready for Careers in a Global Economy

From Minneapolis to the 'Globe'

Originally from Jacksonville, Florida, JuCoby Johnson came to Minneapolis to be part
of the elite University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program. Last year Johnson went abroad with a class to study at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London. He took voice, movement, and acting classes and eventually got to perform on the Globe stage. “As an actor being heavily trained in classical text, the chance to perform on that stage was a dream come true,” he says.

Learn more about learning abroad in Theatre Arts.

Internships: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? CLA Career Services has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Undergraduate Research: Shape Your Curiosity into New Knowledge

The University has funding opportunities available for undergraduates who wish to gain research experience. Programs such as the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) gives undergraduate students the chance to work closely with faculty members on research projects. Full information about this can be found in Undergraduate Research Opportunities.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

With more than 900 student groups on campus, you will have lots of opportunities to find friends and grow as a leader within an organization! Search for organizations via Gopher Link.

Meet Our Faculty
Actors, playwrights, composers, musicians, researchers, and a handful of theatre arts & dance undergraduate students make up the team of 45 people working to prepare Professor Lisa Channer’s production of DENIM. A performance inspired by both the ideals and the shortcomings of American democracy, DENIM aims to investigate how American identity has been formed and branded through the creation and history of denim jeans in the West.

Read more about Professor Channer's work.

Meet Our Alumni

Namir Smallwood has found success as an actor in theatre and on television. An alumnus of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program, Smallwood has performed for theatre companies like the Guthrie Theater, Ten Thousand Things, and most recently, Steppenwolf Theatre. On television, he’s been featured on both Chicago Fire and Betrayal.
"The Twin Cities challenged and nurtured my gift; I learned the business there. I will tell anybody: the UMN/ Guthrie BFA Actor Training Program is some of the best training money can buy." --Namir Smallwood, Alumnus

Read more about Namir's story.

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”
-- Dean John Coleman

You might also explore

Dance
Studies in Cinema and Media Culture
Theatre Arts
Associated Careers

Actors Adult Educators Announcers; Arts Administrators; Directors; Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers; Writers

Admission Information

FRESHMAN: Admission information

TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below:

- Course plans before transferring
- Estimated time to graduation
- Career preparation in CLA
- Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
- Connecting with major/minor departments

Audition Information

Admission to the BFA Acting Program is based on an audition as well as a strong academic record. Learn more about the audition process here.