



The Jeanine Larson Dobbins
Conservatory of Theatre and Dance

Conservatory Policy on Nudity

I. PRODUCTION

- A. The Conservatory of Theatre and Dance recognizes that nudity can be an important element of the artist's palette and integral to the aesthetic world of a production. We also recognize that our community is diverse, and that individuals hold divergent and sensitive moral and social concerns regarding public nudity. The Southeast Missouri State University Faculty Handbook states "Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental to the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights" ... [Faculty are] "Entitled to full academic freedom in creative activity, research, and the publication of the results" ... "he/she should make every effort to indicate that he/she is not an institutional spokesperson." (Faculty Senate Bill 76-A-01 was amended by Faculty Senate Bills 82-A-05, 83-A-03, & 03-A-05.) June 2018 Faculty Handbook, pages 92-93.
- B. "Nudity" in this policy includes intentional full or partial nudity. Partial nudity is defined as bared buttocks, female toplessness, the use of garments that are transparent or provide minimal genital covering or that are so loose the actor might be exposed. Nudity does not include underwear or other garments that provide as much covering as a bathing suit.
- C. If nudity is specified in a script, the director (whether faculty, student, or student group) must state whether they intend to stage the nudity as written at the time the show selected for the season. If a director wishes to add nudity that is not called for in the written script, they must advise the Conservatory at the time the show is selected for the season. Nudity in productions will be agreed upon by the Conservatory. If a request for nudity is denied, the director may opt to direct a different piece (to be agreed upon by the conservatory) or not direct in that production's slot.
- D. Mindful of its legal and ethical obligations, the Conservatory will limit the casting and crewing of the show to students who are 18 years of age or older. As this age restriction requires planning, nudity may not be added during rehearsals. An exception may be requested of the Chair only if all company members are 18 or older, all members consent to the addition, and there is time to assure that all crew members will be 18 or older and the nude content can be advertised to the public.

- E. The use of nudity in a production will be announced beforehand to actors auditioning for the show. The audition form for the show will contain a written description of nudity. No actor will be required to perform nude, or to be in a production containing nudity. Potential crew members will also be advised in advance of nudity and will not be required to work on a production containing nudity.
- F. In rehearsing nude scenes, the Conservatory Policy on Nudity will always apply. At least one female and one male faculty/or student representative will be at all rehearsals where nudity occurs. Additional representatives may be requested. In student-directed shows, the Chair will be present at the first rehearsal and Chair or Faculty mentor at all subsequent rehearsals of each occurrence of nudity in the production.
- G. The Conservatory will alert the public in advance to the presence of nudity in any production. The Conservatory will decide if audiences will be restricted to those 18 or older.

II. CASTING AND REHEARSAL

- A. **Director/Choreographer responsibility:** The director must state on the audition form and listings that no one under 18 will be cast in the show. The audition form and listings must also name the roles requiring nudity, the exact degree of nudity, and describe actions to be performed while nude. Auditioning actors must be allowed in advance to decline to perform such roles, or decline to be on stage during nude scenes, or decline to be in the production.
- B. **Performer's responsibility:** Actors are advised to consider very seriously the commitment they may make to perform nude. The Conservatory will not permit any student under 18 to perform nude, regardless of the student's willingness to do so. If an actor commits to play a nude scene, they are expected to perform as agreed; otherwise it is unfair to the production and to other actors who might have been cast in the role. However, the actor may decline to perform nude at any time before or after the production's opening without fear of repercussion. In this event, the director may elect to recast the role or substitute an understudy.

The actor will be made aware and agree to in writing that even though the Conservatory will take steps to prevent unauthorized videos or photographs of the production, there is still a possibility that audience members may take photographs or video of the performance. There are certain risks inherent in performing in the nude in front of a live audience. Those risks include, but are not limited to: the possibility that the performance will be illegally photographed or recorded by an audience member; the possibility that a recorded portion of the performance could be distributed online or through social media; and the possibility that an actor's image may be used without the actor's consent

Any concerns the actor may have about nudity can be voiced, without fear of repercussion, to the production's stage manager, the director of the production, the Chair of the Conservatory, or to The Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, Sonia Rucker, (srucker@semo.edu or (573) 651-2524).

- C. **No nude auditions:** Actors willing to be cast in roles involving nudity shall not be required to audition nude. The director may request the actor to perform part of an audition in a bathing suit, with a bathrobe available to cover up when not actively auditioning.

- D. **Rehearsals:** The director and a stage manager must both be present during rehearsals of any actors working nude. Student directors must have the Chair present at the first rehearsal of each use of nudity in the show. At least one female and one male faculty/or student representative will be at all rehearsals where nudity occurs. Additional representatives may be requested. In student-directed shows, the Chair will be present at the first rehearsal and Chair or Faculty mentor at all subsequent rehearsals of each occurrence of nudity in the production.
- E. **Personnel present:** The only persons to be present while rehearsing nude scenes shall be those absolutely required. Except for run-throughs, cast and crew members not directly involved in nude scenes shall not be present in the rehearsal area. At least one female and one male faculty/or student representative will be at all rehearsals where nudity occurs. Additional representatives may be requested. In student-directed shows, the Chair will be present at the first rehearsal and Chair or Faculty mentor at all subsequent rehearsals of each occurrence of nudity in the production.
- F. **Security:** Precautions will be taken to secure the privacy of the room. All entries to the rehearsal area will be locked or an assistant will be stationed outside each door to stop anyone who might enter.
- G. **Robes:** Actors performing nude scenes shall bring robes to rehearsal, or robes must be supplied to them. The robes will be kept close at hand, and actors will cover up during any break in the rehearsal for notes, etc.
- H. **Audience Interaction:** Actor shall not, while nude, mix with the audience. The Conservatory shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no member of the audience will be permitted backstage while any Actor is nude.
- I. **Publicity:** Actors will not pose for nude photographs or appear nude for any pictures or motion picture filming, videotaping or other forms of visual recording. Artistic renderings of nude Actors, where the Actor is recognizable, shall not be permitted.

III. FITTINGS and MEASUREMENTS

You cannot be nude during a fitting or measurement.

Do not wear

- Skirts
- Leotards

Do Wear

- Structured bras
- Full underwear
- Dance belt if requested

IV. CLASSROOM

No full or partial nudity without advance approval of the professor. Nudity guidelines from Section I above will apply.

Resources: University of California, Irvine Drama, University of Michigan Theatre Department, Actors' Equity Association