



News Release

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WESTERN OFFERS NEW THEATRE/VIDEO DEGREE

St. Joseph, Mo. —July 6, 2005— “There are so many different ways to communicate with multimedia and visual arts. We felt it was time to create an interdisciplinary focus in storytelling,” said Deny Staggs, assistant professor of theatre at Missouri Western State College.

That is the rationale that led personnel in the communication studies and theatre department to establish a new bachelor of science degree in Theatre/Video. The program begins this fall, along with the opening of two new labs for the department.

“The Theatre/Video degree is unique to our region, but follows a growing trend in the industry to blend media and creative arts, and will allow us to better prepare students who desire employment in the media arts production areas of theatre performance, technical entertainment production and DV (digital video) filmmaking,” Staggs said.

In the past, the department has offered a bachelor of science in education with a speech and theatre major, or a major in speech communication with a video production/performance emphasis, and minors in theatre and video production; but no true combination of both theatre and video.

Brandon Hylton, a senior of Smithville, Mo. who plans to earn the new degree, said he is interested in both acting and video production, and he believes the degree will make students like him more marketable. “It ties in two things that I really enjoy. I think it’s a really good program and I’m glad Missouri Western has it.”

Staggs said the new degree program offers three “tracks” – performance, directing, and technical, and students will choose two for their emphasis.

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Majors will have the opportunity to gain extensive hands-on experience through courses such as on-camera performance, script analysis, digital video editing, digital video filmmaking, directing, costume design and scenography. They may also participate in a new student group, the Griffon Eye Productions, where students film campus events throughout the academic year; or may help plan and participate in the second annual Griffon International Film Festival Oct. 13-15.

Students will also gain practical experience in the new labs. The department is adding a new media production lab, and a MacIntosh computer lab that will include nonlinear editing and sound production software programs. Both will be located in Janet Gorham Murphy Hall.

“We’ll be working with the latest technology to prepare students for the latest technological challenges. We are training students to shoot and produce film-style production,” Staggs said.

He said employment opportunities for graduates could include positions as commercial directors and producers for a television station or cable company, film trailer editors, commercial actors, DVD supplement producers, sound and light technicians on concert tours, commercial writers, theater managers, graphic and web layout technicians, filmmakers or web commercials creators.

For more information, contact the communication studies and theatre department at 816-271-4443, or check out the website at www.missouriwestern.edu/cst/theatre.

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.