

Thornton (TJ) Young
Associate Professor of Dramaturgy

EDUCATION

2017 - Texas State University
MFA, Dramatic Writing
Department of Theater and Dance Graduate Student of the Year, 2016

2010 - University of Texas at San Antonio
B.A., English

EMPLOYMENT

Fall 2022 - Current	Associate Professor of Dramaturgy	School of Drama	Carnegie Mellon University
Fall 2021 - Spring 2022	Special Visiting Faculty	School of Drama	Carnegie Mellon University
Fall 2021 - Spring 2022	Adjunct Professor of Theatre	Department of Fine & Performing Arts	Bowie State University
Fall 2020 - Spring 2021	Adjunct Professor of English	Department of Language, Literature & Cultural Studies	Bowie State University
Fall 2020 - Spring 2021	Adjunct Professor of Theater Arts	School of Theatre, Film and Animation	Point Park University
Fall 2018 - Spring 2019	Adjunct Professor of Theater Arts	School of Theatre and Music	Westminster College

HONORS AND AWARDS

National

Eugene O'Neill Theater Center Semifinalist - 2026, 2024, 2023
Blue Ink Playwriting Contest Semifinalist - 2026
Seven Devils Playwriting Conference Semifinalist - 2026, 2025, 2023
The Gold Medallion, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival - 2025
"Best of the Best" Ten-Minute Plays, Fade2Black Festival - 2025
Ensemble Theatre Playwriting Contest Winner - 2025
Magic in the Rough Spaces Finalist, Rorschach Theatre - 2023
L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award Finalist - 2023
Inkslinger Playwriting Competition Winner - 2020
Herold and Mimi Steinberg Playwriting Award, Distinguished Play - 2018
In-Progress New Play Reading Series Finalist, Unicorn Theatre - 2018
Ken Ludwig Scholarship for Best Body of Work, Kennedy Center - 2017
Herold and Mimi Steinberg Playwriting Award Winner, Kennedy Center - 2016
New Work Festival Finalist, Kitchen Dog Theater - 2017

Regional/Local

Inagural inQbator Reading, Quantum Theater - 2019
Artist Spotlight, Throughline Theater Company - 2019
John Cable Short Play Regional Selection - 2017, 2016
Gary Garrison 10-Minute Play Regional Selection - 2016
10 Minute Play Winner, TETA Playfest - 2016

College

School of Drama Excellence in Teaching Award, Carnegie Mellon University - 2022

ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND CREATIVE PRACTICE

Plays/Musicals

Full Lengths

- The Inseparables
Commissioned as part of the "Classics N'at" series during the 2020 pandemic, this play was then discovered and published by Stage Partners. It has gone on to receive multiple productions a year, in colleges and universities and on professional stages. Over 15 productions to date. Listed are notable productions.
 - Pittsburgh Public Theater Commission
 - SUNY New Paltz - 2026
 - Carnegie Mellon University - 2025
 - Mirrorbox Theatre - 2023
- Kill The Whale : A Musical Odyssey
Kill The Whale is currently in development for a commercial theatrical run with a cast of Broadway veterans such as Grace McClean, Courtney Basset, Jana Jackson, Kyle Scatliffe, Jessie Shelton, and Amber Gray. Directed by CMU Alumni Taylor Reynolds.

- Collaborating with Daniel Emond - Jonathan Larson Grant awardee
- Produced by Tony-Award Winning Producer Jonathan Delmar (Hadestown, Stereophonic, John Proctor is the Villian, Merrily We Roll Along)
- Eugene O'Neill Musical Theater Semi-Finalist - 2026
- Workshop: Orchard Project - December 2025, May 2026
- SAG Harbor Residency - March 2026
- Industry Reading: May 2026
- Workshop: Montclair State University - 2024
- We Fly
 - In development with a New York City industry reading planned for Fall 2026, led by Jade King Carol.*
 - Reading: Pittsburgh Public Theatre
 - Blue Ink Playwriting Contest Semifinalist - 2026
 - Reading: CMU Center for New Work Development - 2026
 - Eugene O'Neill Playwriting Conference Semifinalist - 2024
- Our Side of Midnight
 - Developed as a member of the Pittsburgh Public Playwrights Collective - 2026
- Employee of the Year
 - Developed as a member of the Pittsburgh Public Playwrights Collective - 2025
- Sperm Donor Wanted
 - Received its NYC Off-Broadway premier in 2024.*
 - New York Premier: Theatre4thePeople - 2024
 - L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award Finalist - 2023
- Isle of Noises
 - Slated for publication through Stage Partners in Fall of 2026*
 - James Madison University Commission - 2022
 - Collaborated with Jeghetto
 - Continued Development with Pittsburgh International and Classic Theater - 2026
- Hell Is Empty
 - Reading: Fad2Black Arts Festival - 2025
 - Reading: Pittsburgh Public Theater - 2023
- Dark Skinned Pavement
 - InkSlinger Award Winner - 2020
 - Reading: Palm Beach Drama Works - 2021
 - Regional Premier: Southeastern Louisiana University - 2020
 - Throughline Theater Company Spotlight Artist Reading
- Lyon's Den
 - Reading: Pittsburgh Public Theater - 2020
 - Reading: Lycoming College - 2021
 - Production: Texas State University - 2017
- NO. 6
 - Production: The Studio Theatre, Tierra Del Sol - 2022
 - Production: Indiana Repertory Theater - 2021
 - Production: Stage Left Productions - 2021
 - Production: St. Philip's College - 2021
 - Production: Saginaw Valley State University - 2020

- Reading: University of British Columbia - 2020
- STROKE
 - Seven Devils Semifinalist - 2021
 - Magic in the Rough Spaces Finalist, Rorschach Theatre - 2023
- WASH
 - Seven Devils Semifinalist - 2023
- White House Boys

One-Acts

- Hop and Griz
- Ruby's Baby Blue
- Reel Times at Somerset High

10-Minute Plays

- Pan
- Stuffed
- Lilies
- Before the Fire
- Rocks the Cradle
- Effie

One-Performer Shows

- Colored TV
 - Currently in Development with Jason Shavers
- Touch/Starved
- Screaming Just to Hear Myself

New Play Dramaturgy

Sixty Nine- Seventy by Michael Eichler - 2026 (Dir. Alex Manolo)

Man-Boy by Nick Eibler - 2026

APIS by Lindsay Goranson - 2023 to 2024

Sons of the Boogie by Jason Mendez - 2023 to 2024

Higher by Wayne Firestone - 2022

Trash Fish by Chelsea Harbin - 2021

Paladin by Andrew Heinrich - 2021

Quest and The Girl With the Yellow Jacket by Jonathan Brown & Amber Epps - 2020 to 2021

The Pandemic Project by the students of James Madison University - 2021 (Dir. Wolf Sherril)

Quest Of by Tyler Joseph Rossi - 2021

Lower Sherbourne by Toby Malone - 2021

Feet of Stone by Andrew Henrich - 2021 to 2022

Outgrowth by Toby Malone - 2021

The Mad Classic by Jordan Morille - 2021

Not Really (Little Star) by Toby Malone - 2020

Young Playwrights Festival, City Theater - 2018 to 2026

hop thA A by James Anthoy Tyler (Black And Latino Playwrights Festival) - 2017

Production Dramaturgy

Fat Ham, Playmakers - 2024 (Dir. Jade King Carol)

Other Media

- WAKE: A Cold Reading of Finnegans Wake Podcast - 2024 to 2025
- Date Everything, Video Game - 2023 to 2025
 - Writer
 - Almost 1 Million copies sold
- Theater Embraces the Archive, August Wilson Archives - 2023
- Latent Specters: An Interactive Narrative Podcast - 2020 to 2023
 - Head Writer and Co-Creator
- HAUNTS (An Augmented reality Performance) Prototype
 - Head Writer and Co-Creator

Publications

Plays

- *Reel Times at Somerset High* - Stage Partners Publishing Commission (2024)
- *The Inseparables* - Stage Partners (2022)
- *No. 6* - Concord Theatricals (2017)

Print

- Revenge is Mad Hard: Fat Ham and the Question of Cultural Reclamation (Reproducing Shakespeare), Contributing Writer (2026)
 - *The View of the Elders: An Interview* (pg. 213 - 228)

Online

- Hearing Each Other Over the Gun Fire - HowlRound Theater Commons (2019)

WORKSHOPS

National

Finding Your Way In: Adaptation and How to Start.

- American College Theater Festival, Region 2 and Region 7 - 2026

Writing From The Self

- Mid American Theater Conference - 2026
- Invited Presenter

Make 'em Sweat: Writing Character Based Stakes

- Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region 2 and Region 5 - 2023
- Invited to the National Kennedy Center Festival - 2023

No One Tells It Like You

- Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region 2 - 2021
- Kennedy Center Playwrights Intensive - 2020, 2021, 2022

Challenges in Producing Zoom Theatre

- Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region 2 - 2021
- Invited Presenter

From Concept to Character

- Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region 2 - 2021
- Invited Presenter

End of Play Kickstart Event

- Dramatist Guild of America - 2020
- Invited Presenter

Writing Into Conflict

- Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region 2 - 2019
- Invited Presenter

Regional/Local

Finding Your Way In: Adaptation and How to Start.

- Pittsburgh Public Theater - 2026

Crafting a 10-minute Play

- Suspension Theatrical Arts - 2024, 2025

Characters & Conflict

- Pittsburgh Public Theater - 2023

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

International

Texas State International Research Conference

- *Torch Song Trilogy* and the Emergence of Homonormativity - 2016
- *Death of a Salesman* and the MEntally Unstable Willy Lowman - 2015

National

American Alliance for Theatre & Education

- Invited Presenter as National Representation of the Dramatists Guild
 - “Can I Do That?” An Introduction to the Dramatists Guild Education FAQ - 2023
 - Encouraging A Culture of Care with Theatre Writing - 2023
 - The Power of Playwriting in Education: Accessing Emotional Honesty Through Storytelling - 2023

TEACHING

Carnegie Mellon University

Foundations of Drama

In this course, students receive training in the basic analysis of scripts to determine key elements of structure, plot, characterization, thematic content, theatricality, and aesthetics. In addition, the course provides training in dramaturgical research and writing.

Taught to First Year Undergraduate students. Average Class Size: 20

Dramaturgy 5: In Company

Dramaturgical work in a theatre company extends far beyond individual productions. In this course students get hands-on practice in season planning, writing fundraising text, writing marketing text, and public speaking - all responsibilities that are typically but less visibly part of a dramaturg's job description.

Taught to Third and Fourth Year Undergraduate Students. Average Class Size: 10

Dramaturgy 6: New Work Development/New Work Development Lab

This course will serve as an intensive workshop for new plays in collaboration for playwrights and dramaturgs. Playwrights will present pages from a piece they are currently developing, utilizing other playwrights and dramaturgs as their "cast" for the purpose of hearing the play aloud. The dramaturg paired with each playwright will facilitate a feedback session, built from conversation with the playwright, to elicit feedback from those in class that will aid in the creation of future drafts.

Taught to Third and Fourth Year Undergrads and Second Year MFA Dramatic Writing Students.

Average Class Size : 6

Dramaturgy 3: New Play Dramaturgy/Working with Dramaturgs

This course explores the relationship between dramaturgs and playwrights in a way that promotes anti-racism and practices that abolish and identity-based oppression. Through the study of dramatic and nondramatic texts, observing different approaches to working, discussing and practicing methods of engaging with new work, and engaging in development of new work through guided practice.

Taught to Second Year Undergrads and First Year MFA Dramatic Writing Students.

Average Class Size: 8

Curatorial Editing & Publishing

In this course students will apply skills of script reading and coverage to serve as the jury for submissions to the CMU Literary Press drama imprint. The primary focus of this course will be on curatorial editing, but students may also have opportunity to learn elements of marketing, book design, and production.

Taught to all level of students, both Undergraduate and Graduate.

Average Class Size: 8

Introduction to Playwriting

Introduction to Playwriting in a workshop course that explores the basic principles of writing for the theater through both practical work and discussion of theories and devices. We will discuss the essential elements of playwriting such as action, character, and dialogue, and deepen our understanding through individual writing assignments, providing and receiving feedback, reading the work of living and contemporary playwrights, and seeing theatrical productions. Upon completion of the course, each student will have written and revised two ten-minute plays and a first draft of a one-act.

Taught to all levels of undergraduate students

Average Class Size: 12

Special Topics: Queer BIPOC Playwrights

Within the ever-changing landscape of the American Theatre, a new emphasis has been placed on members of the Global Majority and queer identities. Oftentimes, the same pieces or plays get presented as representative of a certain group and can ignore the works of individuals who are working within the intersectionality of both racial and sexual identities. Through readings of queer theory ideas and analysis of plays written by members of the Global Majority who identify as queer. The goal is to use these plays as not only an understanding of their place within the theatrical world by looking at their application of craft, character, themes, and construction, but also use them as a way to discuss points of view concerning specific times, locations, and social events through the eyes of the character presented.

Taught to Third and Fourth year Undergraduates.

Average Class Size: 20

Howard Community College

Introduction To Playwriting

This course is an introduction to the art and craft of playwriting. Students will complete several writing exercises, participate in workshops and discussions, read various scripts, attend and respond to theatrical performances, build a portfolio of works in progress and prepare a script for a staged reading. Emphasis is placed on the student's increasing ability to freely employ the tools of the craft and respond to the work of other students. This course is writing intensive.

Bowie State University

Expository Writing

The course is used to establish a foundation of critical thinking and gain the reading and writing skills that will serve as the base for college level writing. To this end, the class approaches writing as a tool for learning and communication while building habits of engagement, collaboration, persistence, creativity, and metacognition.

History of Theatre I

A survey of theatre history from pre-Greek through 20th century American realism, this course leads students on an investigation of the development of theatre across continents and cultures, including methods and reasons that theatrical practices, architecture, and voices emerged from specific historical moments, ideologies, and political movements. Students engage with playwrights, trends, and performances for the purposes of better understanding the development of the theatre as an art form and a profession.

Point Park University

Contemporary Drama: Plays and Playwrights

An intensive study of contemporary drama, including major plays/playwrights and established and emerging forms and genres of drama. Students read, discuss, view, and write about contemporary drama and its diverse range of voices.

Dramaturgy

An in-depth and hands-on look at the ever-evolving field of dramaturgy. Through research, analysis, and real-world experience, students discover and define what dramaturgy means to them and how it is implemented to enhance theatrical productions and new play development.

Script Analysis for Designers

An introduction to dramatic text analysis using a variety of techniques. Designed for technical, design and stage management majors. Scripts are analyzed and related back to the student's specific area of study.

Ensemble Lab III

This Ensemble Lab is an extension of the work in the current year's devising, playwriting, and directing classes. During the semester, students identify and research their lineage and create an adaptation of a folktale tied to their lineage. This takes shape in many forms, be it dance, animation, video productions, or other performative modes. Students learn to collaborate on

stories from other cultural identities, giving of their talents and skills to support each other in the creation of their works.

Westminster College

Introduction to Theater

An examination of the process by which dramatic literature becomes theater. The course examines the forms of comedy, tragedy, and their offshoots as well as the elements of theater – structure, character, language, scenography – and the style of theater with an emphasis on modernism and post-modernism.

Playwriting Workshop/Introduction to Playwriting

The course is aimed at developing the composition of short plays (10-minute and One Acts) and monologues by student writers interested in the story telling that is found within live theater. By examining the difference between theater and other storytelling mediums, there is an emphasis on theatrical elements and an understanding of the development process within the class. By the end of the course, students will leave with a small portfolio of writings that have been workshopped during the semester.

SERVICE

National

Mid American Theater Conference

- Playwright Respondent (2026)
- Read and respond to 15 plays and playwrights about their work, offering both highlights of their achievements and potential places for growth.

Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival

- National Playwriting Program Chair, Region 2 (2018 - 2026)
- Helped plan and execute a large scale theater festival with over 1k students across 7 states. Coordinated the reading of student submitted plays and the requisite readings of 10 to 12 plays at the festival. Adjudicated and responded to theater productions at colleges and universities across the country.

Dramatists Guild Foundation

- Fellowship Adjudicator (2024 - Present)
- Read and evaluated Semi-finalist Applications for the Dramatist Guild Foundation fellowships.

Kennedy Center Black Playwrights Gathering

- Director and Coordinator (2024-2025)
- Under the educational arm of the Kennedy Center, I recruited, planned, and facilitated a

gathering of 10 to 12 Black Playwrights from across the country for a weeklong intensive in Washington D.C.

Signpost Playwriting Fellowship

- Reader and Mentor (2023 - Present)
- I read and adjudicate submissions by historically underrepresented writers to help determine three fellowship recipients. I then serve as a mentor for select writers.

InkSlings Playwriting Contest

- Semi-Finalist Adjudicator (2022 - Present)
- Read the top 16 plays submitted to the national contest, provide rankings, and current developmental needs of the plays. Give insight as to which plays are “production ready.”

Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensive

- Co-Director (2020 - 2023)
- Aided award winning Playwright Gary Garrison in the coordination, facilitation, and execution of a virtual Playwriting Intensive with 40+ playwrights from across the country.

Rhode Island State Council of the Arts - Play and Screenwriting Fellowship

- Panelist (2021)
- Adjudicated and selected a winner of the Play and Screenwriting Fellowship out of 100 applicants.

Indiana Repertory Theatre - Young Playwrights in Process

- Workshop leader and Respondent (2021)
- Responded to student written plays and led a workshop based on their specific writing questions.

LMDA Dramaturgy Compensation Task Force

- Task Force Member (2020 - 2021)
- Evaluated the state of the field and helped create a Dramaturgy Compensation calculator and criteria document to be used for freelance Dramaturgs across the nation.

Playwrights Foundation

- National Reading Committee Member (2019 - 2020)
- Read and adjudicated the submitted plays, and helped select the winners of various contests.

Local

Pittsburgh Public Theater

- Board member and Trustee (2023 - Present)
- Serving on the Finance Committee, Education Committee, and Transition/Merger Committee for the largest regional theater in the city.
- Serving as Co-Vice Chair on the Transition and Merger Board of Trustees (2026 - Present)

August Wilson

- Workshop Leader (2024)
- Provide bespoke education and mentorship to local playwrights in collaboration with the August Wilson House.

Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

- Learning and Leadership Committee Advisor (2023 - 2024)
- Served as an advisor for the research and publication of the research pertaining to arts funding equality within the City of Pittsburgh. This resulted in a publication of the results in 2024.

Pittsburgh Public Theater

- New Play Contest Adjudicator (2020 - 2023)
- Read all Finalist plays and, in collaboration with the other adjudicators, selected one winner for the contest.

New Hazlett

- New Work Development/CSA Selection Committee (2020, 2024)
- Read and evaluated over 100 proposals to help create a season of 3 to 5 performances/exhibitions across artistic disciplines.

Dramatist Guild of America

- Co-Regional Representative (2019 - 2025)
- With Mora V. Harris, I served as as the bridge between local playwrights and the Dramatists Guild of America. This involved event planning, panel curation, connecting writers with local theater leaders and the resources provided by the Dramatist Guild of America

Pittsburgh New Works Festival

- Board Member (2018 - 2020)
- Helped coordinate the Pittsburgh New Works Festival. Served as the reading committee head and facilitator for the feedback sessions held during the in-progress reading series.

University Service

OSHER

- Instructor on Record (2024 - Present)
- I serve as the School of Drama instructor for the OSHER class surrounding our productions. I host two talk backs a semester for the OSHER participants in collaboration with the student designers and Faculty or Guest Directors.

College of Fine Arts Service

Office of Engagement and Belonging

- Council Member (2022 - Present)
- Serve as a School of Drama representative within the Office of Engagement and Belonging.

School of Drama Service

School of Drama Awards Ceremony

- Co-coordinator (2024 - Present)
- Coordinate with multiple departments across the School of Drama and the alumni communities in New York, Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh to host the annual School of Drama Awards Ceremony.

Student Representatives

- Faculty Liaison (2022- 2025)
- Served as a faculty liaison for the School of Drama Student Representatives, notating concerns the student body had and passing them along to the appropriate individuals in School of Drama Leadership.

Season Steering Committee

- Committee Member (2022 - 2023)
- Read plays and proposals submitted by both students and faculty/staff members, in conversation with student body learning goals and needs, to select a season of productions for the School of Drama.

Opera Advisor

- Dramaturgy Advisor for La clemencia di Tito (2025-2026)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Dramatists Guild of America

Playwrights Center
Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America