

Tara Noelle Demmy

(she/her)

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EDUCATION

Aug 2018 – **University of Maryland** – College Park, MD
Aug 2022
PhD, Theatre and Performance Studies
Critical Theory Certificate

Dissertation: *The Comedy Propaganda Machine: The Soldier Sketch Writing Contest of World War II*. Advisor: Dr. Franklin Hildy.

Areas of Focus: Comedy Studies, American Studies, Military Entertainment, Pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq, Sketch Comedy, Improvisation, Clowning

Awards:

- International Program for Creative Collaboration & Research Grant (2022) – To study topeng (mask-drama) in Bali, Indonesia
- James F. Harris Arts and Humanities Visionary Scholarship (2021) – for teaching comedy classes to the local military veteran community (online).
- Arts and Humanities Travel Grant (2019)
- Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant (2019)
- Graduate Studies Summer Research Fellowship (2019)
- International Program for Creative Collaboration & Research Grant (2019) – To direct movement for a show in Buenos Aires, Argentina*

*Awarded but not accepted due to conflicting summer research fellowship offer

Service:

- Advisor, Punchbowl, Undergraduate Comedy Group (2020-2022)
- Graduate Senator, University of Maryland Senate (2020-2021)
- Graduate Student Liaison, Teaching and Learning Center (2020-2021)

Aug 2016 – **Villanova University** – Villanova, PA
May 2018
MA in Theatre, 4.0 overall GPA
Comprehensive Exams, passed with distinction
Thesis: *The Funny Ladies of Chekhov (FLOC): Unleashing the Comedic Potential of Chekhov's Female Characters*. Advisor: Dr. Valerie Joyce.

Awards:

- Travel Grant for comic forms residency at Celebration Barn (South Paris, MA)
- Fulbright U.S. Student Program, Semi-Finalist (Indonesia)

Aug 2006 – **Denison University** – Granville, OH
May 2010
BA in Theatre, Magna *Cum Laude*, 3.79 overall GPA
Women's Studies (Minor), Certificate of Organizational Studies
Thesis: *American Bouffon: Historical Deconstruction and Experimental Performance*. Advisor: Dr. Mark Evans Bryan.

Awards:

- David Rounds Award for Most Promising Theatre Major (2010)
- Denison Distinguished Leadership Award (2010)
- Vail Scholarship for Achievement in the Arts (2008)

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2022 **Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE)**
Completed six-hour workshop covering TIE's Best Practices, including tools for developing a consent-based process, setting boundaries, desexualizing the process, choreographing intimacy, and documentation.
- 2016 **Pedagogic Training in Red Nose Clown** – Boulder Circus Center
Week-long intensive training in red-nose clown pedagogy. Workshop included curriculum structuring, teaching tutorials, and development of classroom strategies.
- Oct 2013 –
June 2014 **Helikos International School of Theatre Creation** – Florence, Italy
Under the direction of master movement teacher Giovanni Fusetti, Helikos is a conservatory of physical theatre based in the pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq. Instructors included Giovanni Fusetti, Elizabeth Baron, Matteo Destro, Sarah Liane Foster, and Norman Taylor.
- Lecoq Territories: Neutral Mask, Dynamic study of Nature (elements, materials, animals), Mimo-dynamics (colors, paintings), Characters, 20 Movements of Jacques Lecoq, Treteau, Larval Masks, Expressive Half and Full masks, Commedia dell'arte, Mask Design and Construction, Grotesque Characters, Satiric Drama and Bouffons, Red-Nose Clown, Comic Characters.
- Aug 2009 –
Feb 2014 **Comedic Improvisation Training**
Philly Improv Theater – Philadelphia, PA (Comedic Improvisation, Levels 1-4)
Upright Citizens Brigade – New York, NY (Comedic Improvisation, Levels 1-3)
Second City – Chicago, IL (Sketch Comedy/Improv Intensive, Level 1)
- Trained with the following instructors, known for originating influential comedy techniques: Jill Bernard (HUGE Improv Theater, Minneapolis), Armando Diaz (Magnet Theater, New York City), Mark Sutton (The Annoyance Theatre, Chicago).
- Aug 2008 –
Dec 2008 **Gaiety School of Acting** – Dublin, Ireland
Undergraduate semester abroad. Immersed in an intensive performance program at Ireland's premier training facility for actors.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Aug 2018 –
May 2022 **Instructor of Record / Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland** – College Park, MD

Instructor of Record:

- THET110: **Introduction to the Theatre** (Summer 2021). Part of UMD's Academic Achievement Programs (AAP) for first generation and/or low-income high school seniors.
- THET285: **The Art of Communication and Presentation** (Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Summer 2021, Summer 2022)
- THET223: **Text and Context of Western Theatre** (Spring 2021)

Teaching Assistant:

- THET110: **Introduction to the Theatre** (Fall 2018, Spring 2019)
- THET408U: **Theatre about Show Business** (Fall 2021)
- THET391: **Theatre History II** (Spring 2022)

Guest Lectures:

- **Temple University**
 - “Intro to Movement-based Theatre” for THTR1096: Introduction to Theatre Process (Fall 2021)
- **Villanova University**
 - “Intro to Clowning” for THET: History and Performance of Comedy (2018, 2021)
- **University of Maryland**
 - “Feminist Sketch Comedy” for WMST250: Introduction to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Art and Culture (Fall 2021)
 - “Archives: Methods and Methodologies” for THET700: Introduction to Graduate Studies (2020)
 - “Intro to Commedia dell’Arte” for THET390: History of Theatre, University of Maryland (2020)

2018 – 2022 **Comedy Instructor, Washington Improv Theater** – Washington, DC
Teach long-form improvisation and clowning at Washington Improv Theater’s training center, including 8-week, 4-week, and one-day workshops.

- Level One: **Foundations of Improv**
- Level Three: **Game**
- Level Four: **Ensemble**
- **Introduction to Red Nose Clown**

2021 **Adjunct Instructor, American University** – Washington, DC
Instructor of record for PERF115: Principles, Plays and Performance. Recommended to American University by Dr. Faedra Carpenter, based on expertise and teaching record at University of Maryland.

2020 – 2021 **Improv Instructor, Armed Services Arts Partnership**
Taught online introductory long-form improvisation classes at Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP), an organization dedicated to providing free comedy classes to military veterans and their families.

2017 – 2018 **Education Dramaturg, Villanova Theatre** – Villanova, PA
Created educational study guides, curriculum, and taught workshops and classes to contextualize Villanova Theatre season shows for subscribers and students.

Workshops:

- Improvisation and Collaborative Play (*Godspell*)
- Acting beyond text: Say everything without saying a word (*Intimate Apparel*)
- Theatrical Storytelling (*Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*)
- Shakespeare’s Clowns (*Much Ado about Nothing*)
- Dramaturgy Presentation for ESL courses at the American Language Center (Huntingdon Valley, PA)

2011 – 2018 **Teaching Artist, Arden Theatre Company** – Philadelphia, PA
Taught theatre, storytelling, and comedy to grades K-12. Encouraged active imaginations and collaboration through the development of theatrical skills.

2014 – 2018 **Instructor, Philly Improv Theater** – Philadelphia, PA
Taught long-form improvisation at the Philly Improv Theater Training Center. Curriculum focused on character development, relationship, group play, and object work. Workshops included Red-Nose clown and Grotesque Characters.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- June 2022 – Present **Program Manager, Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP)**
Armed Services Arts Partnership provides free arts and comedy classes to veterans, service members, military family members, and caregivers. Currently lead a growing, mission-driven team to deliver ASAP’s impact nationally. Duties include program strategy, development, volunteer management, and survey-based research tracking how comedy builds confidence, resiliency, and sense of belonging within the military community.
- 2020 – 2022 **Graduate Assistant, University of Maryland** – College Park, MD
International Program for Creative Collaboration & Research (2021-2022)
Administratively supported the IPCCR committee in updating call for proposals and applications, drafting grant award letters, and maintaining the grant awardee website.
- Assistant to the Director of *The School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies* (Spring 2020)
Conducted research on current and potential theatre courses dedicated to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- 2013 – 2021 **Company Member, Tribe of Fools** – Philadelphia, PA
Designed show programs, developed marketing plan and standards of operation, negotiated space rental and artist contracts, and organized the annual fundraiser.
- 2016 – 2018 **Graduate Assistant, Gender and Women’s Studies Program, Villanova University** – Villanova, PA
Responsible for promoting program events and poster design, website updates and layout, distributing course lists and descriptions, and organizing and facilitating the annual GWS Student Research Conference.
- 2011 – 2013 **FringeArts** – Philadelphia, PA
Programming Manager April 2013 – Sept 2013
Negotiated artist contracts, scheduled performances, organized front of house logistics, designed show programs, facilitated local casting, programmed ancillary events, and arranged artist travel and housing for Philadelphia’s premier contemporary arts festival.
Marketing Coordinator March 2012 – March 2013
Development Assistant Oct 2011– Feb 2012
Volunteer Coordinator July 2011– Sept 2011

CREDITS (THEATRE / COMEDY)

Academic

- 2019 – 2021 **University of Maryland**, School of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies – College Park, MD
2021 *The Revolutionists* (Comedy Coach / Assistant Director) // Mainstage
2019 *I’ve Been A Woman* (Movement Coach) // Student Production
- 2016 – 2018 **Villanova University**, Villanova Theatre – Villanova, PA
Participated in student-run performances, classmate’s thesis projects, and department productions.
- 2018 *The Behavior of Light* (Caroline)* // Mainstage
*Staged reading, written by Douglas Carter Beane

2018 *Much Ado About Nothing* (Verges) // Mainstage
2018 *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (Jenny) // Mainstage
2017 *Bedtime Stories* (Molly) // M.A. Directing Thesis

Professional

2018 – Present **Washington Improv Theater** – Washington, DC
Member of House Ensemble “Uncle Gorgeous.” Perform long-form improvisation 2-3 times per month.

2013 – 2021 **Company Member, Tribe of Fools** – Philadelphia, PA
Winner of the 2018 Barrymore Award for Evolving Theatre Company. Tribe of Fools creates original plays by engaging actors, circus artists, comedians, designers, directors, and writers in a process that embraces play, raw theatricality, and kinetic storytelling.

Credits:

Performed in 5 world-premieres including 2017 Philly Fringe hit *Fishtown- A Hipster Noir*, which garnered a Barrymore nomination for Best Ensemble.

2019 *Clown Sex Ed* (Co-creator, Performer) // Philly Theatre Week
2017 *Fishtown, A Hipster Noir* (Co-creator, Performer) // Philly Fringe Festival
2016 *Antihero* (Ensemble) // Philly Fringe Festival
2015 *Zombies...with Guns* (Zombie Clown) // Philly Fringe Festival
2015 *Fake Off, Season 2* (Performer) // TruTV
2013 *Shut Your Wormhole* (Performer) // Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA) at the Kimmel Center for Performing Arts

Select Reviews:

The Philadelphia Inquirer: “[Clown Sex Ed by Tribe of Fools: Vulnerability, Compassion, and Plenty of Crazyness](#)”

Philadelphia Weekly: “[Fooling Around: There are Definite Levels to the Latest On-Stage Story from Tribe of Fools Theater](#)”

Broad Street Review: “[Philly Fringe 2017: Tribe of Fools’ Fishtown: A Hipster Noir](#)”

The Philadelphia Inquirer: “[Fishtown at the Fringe: Delightful noir for hipsters and old-schoolers alike](#)”

2015 – 2018 **Company Member, ManiPedi Sketch Comedy** – Philadelphia, PA
Writer and performer of one of Philly’s oldest and longest running sketch comedy troupes. ManiPedi won the 2014 and 2015 WitOut Award for Best Sketch Group in Philadelphia and was featured in the 2016 Women in Comedy Festival.

Credits:

2017 *ManiPedi, Episode One* (Performer) // Philadelphia Film Society, Philly Film Showcase
2016 *Careful Now* (Writer, Performer) // Villanova University
2015 *Karen’s Dream* (Performer) // Philly Improv Theater

2015 – 2019 **Other Select Credits**

2019 Play in a Day (Performer) // Rorschach Theatre Company
2011–2018 Philly Improv Theater (House Team Performer)
2016 *You’re Not Special: A Bouffon Play about Millennials* (Writer/Performer) // Good Good Comedy Theater

2015-2016 *Frog Night, A Monthly Show of Experimental Comedy*
(Producer/Host) // Good Good Comedy Theater

Festivals:

Bechtel Test Fest (Philadelphia)
Black Friday Comedy Marathon (Philadelphia)
Del Close Marathon (NYC)
First Person Arts Festival (Philadelphia)
Five Dollar Comedy Week (Good Good Comedy, Philadelphia)
Philly Fringe / FringeArts Festival (Philadelphia)
New Jersey Fringe Festival (Hammonton)
Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA)
SoLow Festival (Philadelphia)
Women in Comedy Festival (Boston)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2021 **International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR) Conference**
Paper: "Objects of Morale: World War II Soldier Comedy." Presented in the Popular Entertainments working group.
- 2020 **American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) Conference**
2019 2020 Paper: "Staging Radio: The Amateur Sketch Comedy of World War II
2010 Soldiers." Presented in the Comedy Studies working group.
- 2019 Paper: "There's a Black Woman in Betsy's Basement: Historical Reenactment as Creative Dissent in the Betsy Ross House." Presented in the "Not a Pollyanna View: Performance, Tourism, and Publics" working group.
- 2010 Paper: "American Bouffon: Historical Deconstruction and Experimental Performance." Presented in the "Bodies at Play" working group.
- 2019 **Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Conference**
Paper: "Clowning as Pleasure-Based Sex Education: The Embodied Dramaturgy of Tribe of Fools' *Clown Sex Ed.*" Presented in the "Drama and Society I: Theatre's Clowns and Traditions" panel. Participated in panel "Conversations with Clowns," concerning the intersection of performance and scholarship, and taught a workshop in red-nose clowning.
- 2018 **Theatre Philadelphia Panel Discussion** – Philadelphia, PA
Panel: "Improv is the Future of Theater"
Invited to select panel of Philadelphia actors, directors, and comedy instructors to discuss the relationship between improvised and scripted theatre.
- 2018 **Philadelphia Theatre Research Symposium** – Villanova University
2017 2018 Panel: "A Year in Review: Educational Dramaturgy at Villanova University"
2017 Paper: "We Need a Girl: Homogenous Companies Seek New Voices." Study addressed female creative leadership in Philadelphia comedic theatre companies.
- 2017 **Gender and Women's Studies Student Research Conference** – Villanova University
Performance/Panel: "Body Doors: Exploration of Female Sexuality and Desire through the Grotesque Clown."