

chicago manual style for theatre studies papers

Mastering the Chicago Manual of Style for Theatre Studies Papers

chicago manual style for theatre studies papers serves as the cornerstone for academic rigor and clear communication within the discipline. This comprehensive guide is essential for any student or scholar aiming to present their research on theatre, performance, drama, and related arts with clarity, precision, and adherence to scholarly standards. Understanding the intricacies of Chicago style ensures that your arguments are presented effectively, your sources are meticulously cited, and your work meets the expectations of professors and publishers alike. This article will delve into the core principles of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) as it applies to theatre studies, covering everything from formatting mechanics to citation practices, and the nuances of referencing performance-based evidence.

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Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style in Theatre Studies

The Chicago Manual of Style is a widely respected citation and style guide that offers comprehensive advice on writing, citation, and manuscript

preparation. For theatre studies, its flexible system, which allows for both notes-and-bibliography and author-date citation, is particularly beneficial. The notes-and-bibliography system is generally preferred in the humanities, including theatre studies, as it allows for more detailed commentary in footnotes or endnotes, which can be crucial for discussing complex performance elements or historical context. Adhering to these guidelines ensures that your academic work is not only credible but also easily navigable for readers.

The Notes-and-Bibliography System Explained

The notes-and-bibliography system involves using numbered notes within the text that correspond to fuller bibliographic entries at the end of the paper. This method is highly effective for theatre studies because it allows you to embed critical commentary or supplementary information in the notes without disrupting the flow of your main argument. For instance, you might use a footnote to elaborate on a specific directorial choice in a production or to provide additional historical context about a playwright's life that is relevant but not central to the immediate textual analysis.

Author-Date System in Theatre Studies

While less common, the author-date system is also supported by CMOS. This system uses parenthetical citations in the text that include the author's last name and the publication year. It is often favored in fields that require frequent citation of scientific or social science literature. For theatre studies, if your research heavily relies on contemporary performance reviews or theoretical articles published in journals that primarily use author-date, it might be an option. However, for most historical and critical analyses of drama and performance, the notes-and-bibliography approach is generally recommended.

Basic Formatting and Manuscript Preparation

Proper manuscript formatting is the first step toward a polished and professional theatre studies paper. Adhering to the general guidelines set forth by the Chicago Manual of Style ensures consistency and readability, making your research more accessible to your audience. This includes specifications for margins, font, spacing, and the presentation of your title page and headings.

General Manuscript Guidelines

For most theatre studies papers, a standard double-spaced document is required. This facilitates ease of reading and allows space for instructors to provide feedback. Margins should typically be one inch on all sides. The preferred font is usually a standard, readable typeface like Times New Roman or Arial, in a 12-point size. Page numbers should be placed in the upper right-hand corner of each page, starting from the second page of the manuscript.

Title Page and Headings

Your title page should include the title of your paper, your name, the course name and number, your instructor's name, and the date. The title should be centered and prominent. Subsequent sections of your paper should be clearly delineated using headings and subheadings, following CMOS guidelines for capitalization and punctuation. For example, main section titles are often centered and in all caps, while subheadings might be flush left and in title case.

In-Text Citations and Notes

Accurate in-text citation is paramount in academic writing, and the Chicago Manual of Style offers a robust system for this, particularly the notes-and-bibliography approach favored in theatre studies. This system ensures that every piece of information or idea taken from another source is properly attributed, thereby avoiding plagiarism and allowing readers to consult your sources.

Footnotes and Endnotes

In the notes-and-bibliography system, numbered superscripts are placed in the text at the end of a sentence or clause where an idea or direct quotation is introduced. These numbers correspond to footnotes at the bottom of the page or endnotes collected at the end of the paper. The first citation of a source in the notes is typically a full citation, while subsequent citations of the same source can be shortened. This provides detailed context and allows for extensive commentary, which is invaluable for discussing the nuances of theatrical performances or textual interpretations.

Using Shortened Notes

Once a source has been fully cited in a footnote or endnote, subsequent references to that same source can be significantly shortened. A shortened note typically includes the author's last name, a shortened title of the

work, and the page number. For example, if you have fully cited Jane Doe's "The Art of the Stage," subsequent references might appear as Doe, "Art of the Stage," 45. This streamlines the citation process and keeps the notes concise while still clearly identifying the source.

The Bibliography or Works Cited

Every Chicago-style paper using the notes-and-bibliography system must conclude with a bibliography or a list of works cited. This section provides a comprehensive alphabetical listing of all the sources you have consulted and cited within your paper. It serves as a roadmap for your readers, allowing them to explore your research further and verify your findings.

Formatting the Bibliography

The bibliography is organized alphabetically by the author's last name. Each entry begins with the author's last name, followed by their first name. The title of the work is italicized, and publication details, such as the city of publication, publisher, and year, are included. The specific format for books, articles, websites, and other sources will vary, so consulting the latest edition of the CMOS is crucial. For theatre studies, this section will likely include scholarly books on dramatic theory, performance history, critical essays on specific plays, and potentially primary sources like play scripts.

Distinguishing Between Bibliography and Works Cited

While often used interchangeably, there is a subtle distinction. A "Bibliography" typically includes all sources consulted during research, whether or not they were directly cited in the paper. A "Works Cited" list, on the other hand, includes only those sources that were actually cited in the text. For most academic papers in theatre studies, a "Works Cited" list is sufficient and often preferred, ensuring that every entry can be directly linked to a footnote or endnote in the paper.

Citing Performance and Dramatic Works

One of the most critical aspects of Chicago style for theatre studies papers is the proper citation of dramatic texts and documented performances. Unlike traditional literary works, plays are intended for performance, and their citation can involve different considerations, including different editions of a script and the citation of actual productions.

Citing Play Scripts

When citing play scripts, it is important to be specific about the edition you are using, as translations and annotations can vary significantly. A typical citation for a play script in a note would include the author, title, and publication details. For example: Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 78. When referencing dialogue, you would indicate the character speaking.

Citing Actual Theatre Productions

Citing a live theatre production requires a different approach than citing a published script. You need to provide information that allows the reader to identify the specific production. This typically includes the playwright, the title of the play, the name of the theatre company, the location of the theatre, and the dates of the performance. For example: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Mark Rylance, Shakespeare's Globe, London, August 10, 2023. If you are citing a recorded performance (e.g., a film adaptation or a filmed stage production), the citation format will shift to accommodate the medium.

Handling Visual and Multimedia Evidence

Theatre studies frequently engages with visual and multimedia evidence, from production photographs and video recordings to set designs and costume sketches. Chicago style provides guidelines for incorporating and citing these elements effectively within your paper. Proper acknowledgment of visual sources is as crucial as citing written texts.

Referencing Production Photographs

When using production photographs, you should provide a caption that identifies the play, the production details (director, theatre, date), and importantly, the photographer. In your notes or bibliography, you would cite the source of the photograph, which might be a published book, a journal article, an archive, or a website. For instance, a caption might read: "Figure 1. Sarah Bernhardt as Camille in *La Dame aux Camélias*, directed by Antoine, Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, Paris, 1880. Photograph by Nadar."

Citing Recorded Performances and Videos

Citing recorded performances, such as a DVD of a stage production or a filmed

theatrical event, requires details similar to citing other media. You would typically include the title of the work, the director, the performing company or artists, the recording studio or distributor, and the year of release or recording. For example: *The Importance of Being Earnest*, directed by Peter Hall, filmed performance (London: National Theatre Live, 2016), DVD. If you are referencing a specific scene or moment, you should also provide timecodes.

Common Pitfalls and Best Practices

Navigating the Chicago Manual of Style can present challenges, especially for those new to academic writing in theatre studies. Being aware of common errors and adopting best practices can significantly improve the quality and credibility of your work. Diligence in citation and careful attention to detail are key to avoiding these pitfalls.

Consistency is Key

One of the most critical best practices is maintaining absolute consistency throughout your paper. This applies to every aspect of formatting, from the way you indent paragraphs to the punctuation used in your citations. If you choose to use footnotes, stick to footnotes for all your notes. If you opt for endnotes, use them consistently. Similarly, ensure that the format of your bibliography entries is uniform for all sources of the same type.

Proofread Meticulously

Thorough proofreading is essential for catching errors in both content and formatting. Pay close attention to details such as correct capitalization in titles, accurate page numbers, and the proper placement of superscripts for notes. Many word processing programs offer spell-check and grammar-check tools, but they cannot replace careful human review. Reading your paper aloud can help you catch awkward phrasing and grammatical errors that you might otherwise miss.

Consult the Manual and Style Guides

The Chicago Manual of Style is a comprehensive resource, and it's wise to consult it directly when you encounter specific citation questions. Many universities also provide supplemental style guides tailored to specific departments, which can offer helpful clarifications or modifications relevant to theatre studies. Staying updated with the latest edition of the CMOS is also important, as guidelines can evolve over time.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary citation system recommended for Chicago Manual of Style for theatre studies papers?

A: The notes-and-bibliography system is generally recommended for theatre studies papers using the Chicago Manual of Style, as it allows for detailed commentary in footnotes or endnotes, which is useful for analyzing performance and dramatic elements.

Q: How do I cite a live theatre production using Chicago style?

A: To cite a live theatre production, you typically include the playwright, the title of the play, the name of the theatre company, the location of the theatre, and the dates of the performance. For example: Hamlet, directed by Simon Godwin, Royal National Theatre, London, October 25, 2023.

Q: What is the difference between a bibliography and a works cited list in Chicago style?

A: A bibliography lists all sources consulted during research, while a works cited list includes only those sources that were actually cited in the text. For most academic papers, a works cited list is sufficient.

Q: How should I format the first citation of a book in a footnote using Chicago style?

A: The first citation of a book in a footnote includes the author's first and last name, the title of the book (italicized), the city of publication, the publisher, the year of publication, and the specific page number. For example: Jane Doe, *The Performance of Text* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 15.

Q: Can I use the author-date system for my theatre studies paper if my professor allows it?

A: Yes, while notes-and-bibliography is preferred, the Chicago Manual of Style also supports the author-date system. If your professor permits it, you can use parenthetical citations like (Doe 2020, 15) followed by a reference list.

Q: How do I cite a play script that I am referencing?

A: When citing a play script, include the author, the title (italicized), publication information (city, publisher, year), and the page number. If quoting dialogue, indicate the character. For instance: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New York: Penguin Classics, 1999), 3.4.1.

Q: What information should be included when citing production photographs?

A: When citing production photographs, include a caption that identifies the play, production details (director, theatre, date), and the photographer. In your notes or bibliography, cite the source from which you obtained the photograph.

Q: Is it acceptable to use shortened notes for subsequent citations of the same source in Chicago style?

A: Yes, it is not only acceptable but recommended. Shortened notes typically include the author's last name, a shortened version of the title (italicized if it's a standalone work), and the page number, making your notes more concise.

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