

Cristen Monson

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EDUCATION

M.F.A Theatre: Directing Illinois State University

M.A. Theatre: History and Criticism Illinois State University

B.A Theatre: Performance University of Texas at El Paso

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Illinois State University Instructional Assistant Professor of Theatre

- **THE 240 Introduction to Directing:** Instructor for an undergraduate course introducing the fundamentals of theatrical directing, including script analysis, conceptual development, staging, blocking, and collaboration with actors and designers.
- **THE 314a03 Acting for Musical Theatre:** Teach techniques and skills specific to acting in musical theatre, including vocal performance, movement, and character development.
- **THE 153 Intro to Acting:** Teach techniques and skills specific to acting. An introduction to psychological and physical acting techniques and methods.
- **THE 176a01 Contemporary Female Playwrights:** Explore the works and contributions of contemporary female playwrights, examining themes, styles, and cultural impacts.
- **THE 176a01 Arts and Society Theatre:** The Sociopath Next Door in Theatre: Analysis of Characters in Theatre and Film that display sociopathic and narcissistic traits and qualities.
- **THE 103 and THE 104 Fundamentals of Theatre 1 and 2:** Introduce students to the basic principles and elements of theatre, including history, theory, text analysis and practice.
- **THE 176a02 Arts and Society: Film:** Analyze the relationship between film and society, focusing on the cultural, social, and political influences of cinema.
- **THE 152 Experiencing Theatre:** Survey course for non-majors. Provided students with immersive experience in theatre, including attending performances and engaging in critical discussions.
- **IDS 121 Text in Context:** Plays for Women by Women: Examine plays written by women for women, exploring themes of gender, identity, and representation.

- **THE 102 Theatre Practicum:** First year Experience course. Freshman only section introduced students to The School of Theatre Dance and Film and ISU.

Bradley University, Peoria Visiting Instructional Assistant Professor Theatre

- **THE 336 - History of Theatre & Drama** / The origins of theatrical and dramatic impulses in ancient cultures as well as the history of theatre and drama in the classical and medieval periods.
- **THE 223 - Script Analysis for the Theatre** Fundamentals of directing the play: script analysis, event and action, casting, rehearsal, and staging, collaborating with actors and designers.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Illinois State University

Academic Advisor, Recruitment Coordinator
School of Theatre, Dance and Film
2015-present

- Advise more than 375 Theatre and Dance majors and minors, serving as a primary academic resource and student support specialist.
- Act as the first point of contact for prospective students and families exploring programs within the School of Theatre and Dance.
- Serve as Head of the Recruitment, Admission, and Scholarship Committee and as an active member of the School Curriculum Committee.
- Coordinate course scheduling for Theatre, Dance, and Film programs, ensuring efficient planning and alignment with curricular needs.
- Organize and facilitate major recruitment initiatives including open houses, audition days, prospective student visits, and Chicago Unified Auditions.
- Supervise student work-study staff supporting social media, volunteer coordination, and recruitment outreach.
- Designed and launched a freshman-only orientation course for the 2016 cohort to strengthen student transition, connection, and retention.
- Active member of ILACADA, the AAC Advisor On-Boarding Committee, and Professional Development Co-Chair.
- Serve on the College Curriculum Committee, contributing to curricular development that addresses evolving student needs and academic challenges.

Nomad Theatre Company

Co-founder and Artistic Director

- In 2019 Co-founded a community-based, site-specific theatre company committed to bold, inclusive, and artistically engaging productions.
- Produce an annual season of 4–6 shows, overseeing artistic planning, volunteer coordination, ticketing systems, VIP patron experiences, and daily operations.
- Serve on committees dedicated to new works development, fundraising initiatives, and artistic hiring.
- Manage marketing efforts including website updates, social media presence, and creation of promotional materials.
- Direct theatrical productions and cultivate partnerships within the local arts community to strengthen collaborative opportunities.
- Support the growth and administration of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization through strategic planning and operational leadership.
- Secure community arts grants and sponsorships, contributing to long-term sustainability and organizational expansion.

Illinois Wesleyan University

Admissions Counselor

- Conducted applicant interviews, reviewed and evaluated admissions applications, and advised prospective students and families throughout the enrollment process.
- Visited more than 80 high schools annually.
- Represented Illinois Wesleyan University at regional and national recruitment events, including NACAC and PVA NACAC college fairs.
- Counseled students on scholarship opportunities and financial aid pathways to support access, affordability, and informed decision-making.
- Led the Student Ambassador program, supervising campus tour operations and enhancing the overall visitor experience for prospective students.
- Delivered admissions presentations to diverse audiences, strengthening institutional visibility and contributing to enrollment goals across assigned territories.

Illinois Wesleyan University

School of Theatre and Dance

Recruitment Coordinator

- Served as Recruiting Coordinator for the School of Theatre Arts, overseeing all major recruitment and admission activities.
- Placed targeted advertisements in national theatre and arts publications to increase

program visibility and applicant reach.

- Coordinated all on-campus auditions, including campus tours, guest speakers, hospitality, and supervision of four work-study students.
- Planned and organized individualized itineraries for admitted prospective students during on-campus visits.
- Managed all welcome events and created social media groups to support admitted students and foster early community building.
- Member of IACAC, contributing to statewide recruitment standards and professional development within college admissions.

Town of Normal

Director of Summer High School Theatre Program

- Direct large-scale, community-centered productions for the Town of Normal, including *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *High School Musical*, *The SpongeBob Musical*, and *Guys and Dolls*.
- Unified diverse casts of students and community members to create high-energy, visually compelling performances.
- Fostered collaborative, supportive rehearsal environments that emphasized ensemble cohesion, creative risk-taking, and strong narrative clarity.

Illinois Shakespeare Summer Camps for Youth

Administrator, teacher, founder

- Created and launched the Illinois Shakespeare Festival's first youth summer camp program, establishing a comprehensive arts education initiative.
- Developed curriculum and led programming for middle school and high school camps focused on acting, Shakespearean text, communication skills, and one-act performance showcases.
- Expanded offerings with the Bard Buddies elementary program (2018) and later added film and digital media camps (2024).
- Managed full camp operations, including hiring and supervising teaching staff, creating an employee handbook, overseeing curriculum development, and coordinating registration.

Private Acting and College

Audition Coaching

- Provide individualized acting coaching for high school students through in-person and virtual instruction.

- Specialize in preparing seniors for competitive college auditions in acting and musical theatre, including monologue and song selection, repertoire development, performance coaching, and interview preparation.
- Support students in navigating application requirements, prescreen submissions, and audition schedules with clarity and confidence.
- Mentor students through the college search process, helping them identify programs aligned with their artistic goals and educational aspirations.
- Strengthening students' performance skills, confidence, and authentic artistic expression while guiding them toward successful admission to collegiate theatre program

Garrison Forest School

Middle School Teacher US History and Theatre Arts
Baltimore, MD

- Taught seventh-grade U.S. History at Garrison Forest School, designing an inquiry-based curriculum centered on critical thinking, civic understanding, and historical analysis.
- Used primary sources, discussion-based learning, and project-driven instruction to deepen students' historical perspective.
- Directed all Middle School theatrical productions and sponsored the Drama Club, fostering student growth in performance, collaboration, and leadership.
- Enhanced classroom learning through annual educational travel to New York City, connecting historical study with experiential exploration to sites such as the Tenement Museum, Ellis Island, Thomas Edison National Historical Park, and the former Triangle Shirtwaist Factory to illuminate themes of immigration, industrialization, urban development, and social reform.

Theatre Teacher

Ysleta Independent School District,
El Paso, TX

- High School Theatre Teacher at Del Valle High School and Parkland High School.
- Led the Theatre Program and sponsored the Thespian Honor Society.
- Directed *Our Town* (1995) and *Tartuffe* (1996).
- Hosted the UIL District Competition in 1996.
- Taught Intro to Theatre, Acting I, Acting II, and Stage Craft

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts College Curriculum Committee
- Recruitment and Scholarship Committee School of Theatre, Dance and Film
- Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts Dean search
- Illinois State University School of Theatre and Dance Director Search
- Illinois State University School of Theatre Director Search Committee
- Co-Chair Professional Development Committee for Academic Advisors Council
- Member Professional Development Committee for Academic Advisors Council
- Panel Member IAI Transfer Evaluations for Theatre, Illinois Board of Education
- Marshall for College of Fine Arts Graduation Ceremony
- National Association of Academic Affairs Administrators
- Crossroads Theatre Committee, School of Theatre Dance and Film

AWARDS

- Herb Sanders Award for Outstanding Academic Advising
- Outstanding New Undergraduate Advisor award
- Outstanding Undergraduate Actor University of Texas at El Paso

GRANTS

- Town of Normal Harmon Arts Grant 2026 \$1500.00
- Community Arts Access Grant 2025 \$1500.00

CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATION

- Presenter for CTLT Conference “11,000 Pieces Project: Infusing Service Learning in the Classroom” Illinois State University
- Co-Presenter for “Building Campus Community Through Collaborative Problem Solving” hosted by Heartland
- Community College, Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, Lincoln College

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Selected Theatre Directing

Alice by Heart (Fall 2026)
25th Annual ...Spelling Bee
Two Gentleman of Verona (*assistant dir for Danielle Roos*)
Paint Night by Cari Crim
American Girl(s) by Abby Hoffman
Guys and Dolls, by Frank Loesser
The Polling Place: 10-minute plays original works
The Curious Incident...Dog in the Nighttime
SpongeBob SquarePants the Musical
High School Musical
The Secret Garden-Musical
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum
Barricade a short film by Pamela Morgan,
The Art Show series of short plays
The Art of Reincarnation by Nicole Neely
Critic's Choice by Patti Cassidy
Bird on a Ferry by Blaise Miller
Fly Girl, Fly by Brigitte Viellieu
The Songs of Tim Rice original cabaret
Oklahoma R2K Prairie Fire Theatre
Pirates of Penzance
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Our Town by Thornton Wilder
Tartuffe by Moliere

Illinois State University, IL
Normal Summer Theatre, IL
Illinois Shakespeare Festival
Nomad Theater Company IL
Illinois State University, IL
Normal Summer Theatre, IL
Nomad Theatre Company, IL
Community Players Theatre, IL
Normal Summer Theatre, IL
Normal Summer Theatre, IL
Prairie Fire Theatre, IL
Community Players Theatre, IL
Nomad Theatre Company, IL
Nomad Theatre Company, IL
Heartland Theatre Company, IL
Heartland Theater Company, IL
Heartland Theatre Company, IL
Heartland Theatre Company, IL
Illinois Wesleyan University, IL
Prairie Fire Theatre, IL
Prairie Fire Theatre, IL
Summer on Stage, MD
Parkland Theatre, TX
Parkland Theatre, TX

Selected Acting Credits

Vanya, Sonya, Masha and Spike
Bright Star
Evergreen Cemetery Walk
The Electric Baby
A Little Night Music
Two Gentleman of Verona
Urinetown
Into the Woods
Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!
Das Barbeque
Halls a Poppin
She can Sing
Jaques Brel is Alive and Well...
Tycoon

Masha
Mama Murphy
Susan B Anthony
Helen
Desiree
Antonio
Pennywise
Witch
Mrs. Lindberg
Many
Soloist
Solo Cabaret
Soloist
Maries Jenne

Heartland Theatre Company, IL
Prairie Fire Theatre
Illinois Voices Theatre, IL
Heartland Theatre Company, IL
Prairie Fire Theatre, IL
Illinois State University, IL Union
Theatre, TX
Melbourne Stone Theatre, DE
Baltimore Theatre Project, MD
Everyman Theatre, MD
Rose's Turn, NYC
Don't Tell Mama, NYC
Theatre Works, NYC
Douglass Fairbanks Theatre, NYC

REFERENCES

Robert Quinlan

Associate Professor, Directing and Acting
Illinois State University
Artistic Director Illinois Shakespeare Festival
rfquinl@ilstu.edu
309-438-5234

Heather Reynolds

Illinois State University
Assistant Professor, Lighting
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Ann Haugo

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Illinois State University
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Adam Fox

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Lori Adams

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Freelance Director
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