

New Theatre-Goer? Here's a quick and easy

Guide to *Theatre Etiquette* at ISU...and beyond!

1. Get your tickets in advance!

Seating in the CPA is reserved—the sooner you get your tickets, the better your seats will be! The Westhoff Theatre has general admission, but the space is smaller and performances usually sell out. To avoid being on a waiting list (and possibly missing the show!), get your tickets as soon as possible. Tickets for the entire School of Theatre performance season are available at the CPA box office starting in August. Professional companies sometimes start selling tickets a year or more in advance.

2. Dress nicely!

Going to the theatre is an opportunity to dress up! Many audience members at professional theatres choose to dress “semi-formal,” or “business casual.” Here at ISU, most audience members arrive in a nice pair of jeans. Regardless of where you attend a performance, it's *not* appropriate to wear items like sweats, sport flip-flops, dirty sneakers, or potentially offensive t-shirts.

3. Arrive early!

It *always* takes longer to get to the theatre and find your seat than you may anticipate! Remember that you may need time to use the restroom or get a drink of water before entering the theatre. Also, you may find cool things to look at or read in the lobby (like cast and crew bios or historical information about the play). Most theatres open the doors 30 minutes before the performance begins. Many theatres will not seat latecomers, and, at ISU, audience members are expected to be in their seats 10 minutes before “curtain,” or their tickets can be resold!

4. Do NOT bring food or drink in the theatre!

Most theatres (including the CPA and Westhoff) only permit water in a clear bottle with a cap. Other food and drink items can potentially damage the floors and seats of the theatre and distract other audience members from the performance. Refreshments are usually available in the lobby during intermission.

5. Turn off your cell phone!

There is nothing more distracting to a performer or fellow audience member than a phone ringing! Putting your phone on “vibrate” or “silent” isn't good enough—sometimes cell phone frequencies can cause theatre sound equipment to malfunction. Also, texting during the performance or in between scenes is rude and distracting. If you need to make a phone call, it's more polite to excuse yourself and make your call in the lobby, and *most* polite to wait till intermission or after the show. Intermission is also a good time to get out that smartphone and “tweet” about how awesome the show is!

6. Be respectful!

It's not necessary to stay silent in the theatre—take advantage of opportunities to laugh, cry, applaud, etc! There are many appropriate moments for these things. For instance, when watching a straight play, it's appropriate to applaud at the ends of acts. When watching a musical, it's appropriate to applaud after songs, dances, or even scenes. Unless it's an emergency situation or part of an interactive play, it's *never* appropriate to *talk* during the performance. Also, if you feel the need to critique the performance, please wait till you leave the theatre building. This will avoid hurt feelings of those within earshot, who may include friends or family of the actors or production team.

7. Be open-minded!

The theatre is a great place to learn new things and be exposed to new ideas. Go in with an open mind and you may discover new things about yourself, others, art, and the world you live in. Let the performance inspire you!