Theatre 240

Theatre Design and Technology

Prerequisites: Theatre 100! (Do not take this class without Theater 100)

Class meets: Monday and Wednesday 1100 Sharp to 1150 more or less
Section 1 – Scenic Lab: 1400-1650 Thursday
Section 2 -- Light Lab: 45 hours--by arrangement
Section 3 – Costume Lab: 0900-1150 Tuesday

Instructors:
Ryan Grossheim (Scenery LEC): Office DA 226 (Theatre Lobby); E-Mail: ryangrossheim@gmail.com
Office Hours: 1200 to 1300 M, other times by appointment.

Prof. Loren Schreiber (Scenery LAB): Office DA 203; E-Mail: lschreib@mail.sdsu.edu

Emily Smith (Costume LEC): Office DA 4; E-Mail: ensmith01@gmail.com.
Office Hours: 1500 to 1600 W, other times by appointment.

Jordyn Smiley (Costume LAB): Office DA 4; E-Mail: jordynsmiley@gmail.com

Conor Mulligan (Lighting LEC): Office PSFA 411 ; E-Mail: conor.mull@gmail.com
Office Hours: 1000-1100 W, other times by appointment.

Chad Shelton (Lighting LAB): E-Mail: chadshelton.light@gmail.com

Texts:
Introduction to Technical Production and Design (Wolf: Montezuma customized-Purple)
Scene Design and Stage Lighting, 9th ed. by Parker, Wolf and Block
A Streetcar Named Desire, by Tennessee Williams

This course will introduce the beginning theatre artist to the incredible variety of work that takes place “behind the scenes” of theatrical production. We will examine the process by which the physical production comes together, with emphasis on the designers’ unique contributions to this process. From concept to completion, we will examine how scenery, costumes and lighting gets from the designer’s mind to the stage and what happens to it once it gets there. At pertinent steps along the way, we will pick up the tools of the trade and perform the tasks required of the designers and technicians in realizing a design. By the end of the semester, you will have a better understanding of this exciting area of theatre and a host of new “lifeboat skills.” You may discover that design and theatre technology have as much to offer the “stage-struck” or “theatre-smitten” student as the performance side of our magical business. If nothing else, you will come to respect the contributions of all the disciplines in this thing called Theatre.

THIS IS NOT A CLASS ABOUT THEATRE!
This is a class about optimizing your human potential. Theatre and theatre design and technology are just the media that carry the message. We will examine how theatre helps us to find our place in the universe; how the act of creation, whether a complex character in Hamlet or a simple prop to decorate the stage, is a uniquely human endeavor—a compulsion that defines us and sets us apart from the other animals. We will learn why theatre is, perhaps, the greatest form of human expression and how this magnificent art permits us to face mortality
with courage and dignity. The actor speaks, the artist raises his brush to the canvas, the craftsman draws his blade across a board—each is a denial of chaos and raises us from despair. You think you know what you want to “be”? An actor? An artist? A technician? Get over it! You have barely started learning the business of being. This is what this class is about.

OK. Now that you know the good stuff, what is required for the course? There will be a lot of reading, some thinking, some more thinking, some woodworking, reading some drawings, a little painting, some sewing a little rigging, light-hanging and exams too (1 scenery, 1 costume and 1 lighting). And . . .

. . . Department productions. This is show business (no business like it!) so you should see as many productions as possible, but, at very least, our own department’s productions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Opening Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pal Joey</td>
<td>February 28</td>
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<td>Jungle Book</td>
<td>April 25</td>
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THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS . . .

. . . is to produce a well-rounded theatre practitioner.

YOUR OBJECTIVES AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES . . .

. . . are the acquisition a several new practical skills in each of the three areas. Also, you will be able to see a play in a new and more deeply informed way—you will see that sets, lights and costumes are not just decoration, but tell the playwright’s story visually.

HOW YOUR PERFORMANCE IN THIS CLASS WILL BE MEASURED

Writing

Your ability to articulate your ideas will be assessed through writing. Three critiques (one for each section) are required for this course, according to specific criteria that will be discussed in class. All critiques must be on Pal Joey. Critiques are to be 3-6 pages, double-spaced, typed—no exceptions. Critique due-dates are indicated in your class calendar. Crew conflicts must be discussed with instructors in advance in order to arrange an alternative performance. Buy your season tickets now! Online at http://theatre.sdsu.edu.

Projects

Several projects will be assigned throughout the semester. Your creativity, ability to follow directions and meet deadlines will be assessed.

Exams

There are three Section Exams, which will determine how well you have retained the information and how well you are able to synthesize the information into new awareness of the myriad elements of a play production.
Quizzes

There may be additional quizzes in the laboratory sessions, which will assess your ability to acquire knowledge through reading assignments.

Attendance

Class
Attending the class is expected, since we value your input to our discussions. However, things do come up that may take priority. You may miss three classes without penalty. After three absences your grade will be reduced 10% (and we will chat). I suggest you save them for special occasions. Note: being late to class twice will equal one absence. Regardless, projects are due when specified whether you are in class or not. Late projects and papers will be reduced one letter grade for each calendar day. (Would you go on stage without knowing your lines? I think not!)

Laboratory Sessions
You may miss one Scenic or Costume laboratory without penalty, but projects are due when specified, regardless. For Lighting Section, you must attend all lighting hangs, focus sessions, strikes, and any additional meetings in order to receive credit. Please wear appropriate clothing: no open shoes or sandals in the scene shop or on stage (you will not be allowed to attend and you will be counted absent).

How the course will be graded:

Lab: 25%

Scenery Section: 25%
- Projects—30%
- Paper—20%
- Quiz—30%
- Attendance—20%

Costume Section: 25%
- Projects—30%
- Paper—20%
- Quiz—30%
- Attendance—20%

Lighting Section: 25%
- Projects—30%
- Paper—20%
- Quiz—30%
- Attendance—20%

To Pass This Class . . .

With an A: join in class discussions with enthusiasm; demonstrate that you know the material and actually thought about it. Show superior understanding of the production process and turn in well-thought-out and well-crafted projects on time.

With a B: join in class discussions; demonstrate that you know the material and actually thought about it. Show good understanding of the production process and turn in either well-crafted projects of average quality or superior projects of average execution on time.

With a C: join in class discussions occasionally; demonstrate that you heard the material and remembered it. Show average understanding of the production process and turn in average projects of average execution on time.

With a D: sit there and say nothing. Skim the material and luck out on your exams. Fail to grasp the production process and turn in poorly thought-out projects of poor execution.

With an F: well, you can’t pass the course with an F!
[Table]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96—100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>91—95</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>60—and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Our Philosophy of Grades**

By definition, most of us are average. Average performance in this class—that is, the level of performance that most of you will achieve—will be rewarded with a grade of C. *This is a good grade!* Simply showing up for class every day and turning in all assignments on time is expected. Merely meeting expectations in this class will earn a grade of C. To earn greater than a C your work will have to be exceptional in quality, quantity and enthusiasm for the subject. This is rare. Please do not expect better than a C unless you are really prepared to do exceptional work. Furthermore, grades are for you to measure your own level of achievement against that of your peers; they have no meaning outside of the academic environment. If you are planning on going to graduate school, then your grade in this class will have some intrinsic value. Otherwise they are meaningless—so please do not quibble about them. If you have any questions about the level of your performance, please arrange to talk to me outside of class. I can help if you are serious about earning a B or an A.

“It is impossible for the average student to get an A in this class!”
~ Disgruntled Student ~

"Tenacious attempts at greatness are more important than the actual achievement thereof"
~ GGTT ~

"A man who works with his hands is a laborer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands, his brain and his heart is an artist."
~ Louis Nizer ~
FAQs
(Frequently Asked Questions)

I am going to be a famous actor and/or director. Why do I have to take a tech classes?

**Department Philosophy.** The Department of Theatre is not a conservatory where the student concentrates on only a narrow subject. If you wish to study acting as opposed to theatre, then you should attend an acting conservatory. The Department of Theatre takes pride in turning out well-rounded theatre students—students who have been exposed to all the myriad aspects of the theatre art form and the theatre business. There is so much more to theatre than the actor’s performance on stage. In fact, for every actor appearing on stage, there are 5 to 10 people working behind the scenes to create a memorable theatre experience. It stands to reason, then, that, even if you have an emphasis in acting, the preponderance of your course work will be in other areas, because there are so many other areas of theatre to learn about.

**Our Philosophy:** Much of what you will learn in this class and other tech classes is what I call “lifeboat skills,” or, simply, those skills it takes to survive our trip on the good ship Earth. This class will give you the opportunity to flex those math muscles you have not used since high school. You will learn to appreciate good craftsmanship and the effort it takes to achieve it. You will come to value tools and their proper use. If nothing else, you will come to respect the work of other theatre artisans.

*Power tools frighten me. Do I have to use them?*

No, of course not. There are hand tool versions of every power tool, which we will provide you if necessary. You must be prepared to take longer on your projects, however, since power tools make most tasks faster to do. I urge you to at least try the power tools. After learning the proper use of power tools, most students no longer find them intimidating.

*If I get hurt in class and have to go to the hospital, the university will pay for it—right?*

Wrong! I suggest you acquire student health insurance. It is quite reasonable and can save you a lot of money should you be injured for any reason.

*I have an audition during this class. Is that an excused absence?*

No. Please schedule your audition for another time.

*I missed a class because my grandmother died (for the fourth time). Can I make up the exam?*

No. Sorry about your grandmother (again), but you cannot make up the exam. Other work may be made up if your absence was excused for: Military duty; death in the immediate family; illness or hospitalization (with a doctor’s note); or by prior arrangement, e. g., weddings, bar mitzvahs, family vacations to Wally World.

*Do I really have to take the quiz on the last page and hand it in on Wednesday January 30th?*

Yes.
Quiz 1 on the 240 Syllabus (To be completed before class on 1/29/14)

Name: ___________________________________________

1. The average student in this class will earn what grade (circle one)? A B C D F

2. If you turn in something late, what happens?

3. If you want to study acting exclusively, what sort of school should you attend?

4. When is your scenery critique of *Crimes of the Heart* due?

5. Explain “Our Philosophy of Grades” in 25 words or fewer.

6. If you get hurt in any of the 240 Labs, the University will pay for your medical expenses:
   
   True

   False

7. For every actor appearing on stage, there are ____ to ____ working behind the scenes.

8. What sort of footwear is NOT acceptable in the scene shop or on stage?

9. What is this class about?

10. One thing I would like to learn in this class is…