Drama 330 - Theatre Technology and Scenography

Randolph-Macon College
Fall 2005

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Course Description
The course demonstrates the ways in which the changing technology of theatre affects theatre scenography- the coordinated design of scenery, lights, costumes, and other areas. Students learn the vocabulary of equipment, the properties of modern scene materials, the advances in technological fields, and the professional standards in design and technology. Introduced in this semester are the techniques of design and simple scenic and lighting design projects which utilize computer assisted design (CAD) programs, although the greatest use of CAD is in DRAM331. A hands-on laboratory component is part of the course, as are occasional field trips to neighboring professional theatres.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students should:
1) understand and develop an appreciation of the technical aspects of theatre.
2) have a basic knowledge of tools, hardware, and materials used in stagecraft
3) have a basic knowledge of approaches to scenic design
4) have a basic knowledge of drafting and other methods of visual communication used in theatrical design

Assignments
• Theatrical Design And Production By J. Michael Gillette - You are expected to have completed the assigned readings at the beginning of the week noted. Come to class ready to ask and answer questions, discuss, argue, defend, etc. Remember that theatre and drama are ART, which means that there are no right or wrong ideas or thoughts, there are only those that are supportable, workable, and comfortable--or not. Readings in the text may or may not be directly discussed in class, but you are expected to discuss them in your Journal, (see below...).

• Design Critique of Productions. You must see the three R-MC productions this fall; The Bald Soprano (Sept 28- Oct. 1), and The Fantastiks (November 16-19), and A Christmas Carol (December 9-15), and write about them in your journal. These will form the basis for in-class discussions. In addition, you must see and write “formal” papers about two professional productions of your choice. Anything at Barksdale Theatre, Theatre IV, The Fireside Theatre, The Carpenter Science Theatre Company, The Carpenter Center or the Landmark in Richmond, The Riverside Theatre in Fredericksburg, or a variety of professional theatres in DC would be acceptable. You must have the instructor’s approval for any other possibilities. Critiques are due within a week of seeing the performance, and by the dates listed on the schedule. See the performance critique handout for more information (15% of your Final Grade)

• Sketchbook/Journal. Talk(well, write…) about anything that happens in this class. I will expect written comments on assigned readings, on class experiences, on plays seen, etc. You will also do some particular sketching exercises. See the handouts for more information. (20% of your Final Grade)

• Designer Research. An 8-10 minute Oral Presentation, WITH VISUAL SUPPORT and written documentation to turn in (ie. Formal outline with bibliography), on an important designer or technical innovation. (10% of your Final Grade)

• 20 lab hours. This is the minimum number of hours required to PASS the course -you are encouraged to do more. This is a class that deals with the backstage aspects of theatre and having a hands on experience is important to the understanding of the material. (15% of your Final Grade)
   • You must sign up for labs in advance. The official shop schedule will be posted soon. Do not call me to ask about hours. Check the Schedule!!!!!
   • All Class Members MUST be signed up for required hours by the end of the second week of classes. Failure to sign up for hours will result in a failing lab grade.
   • Once signed up for required hours, only I can cross you off the list. You must check with me in advance to remove your name from the sign-up sheet. Absences from lab count as an absence from class.
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- You must sign up for a minimum of 2 hours at a time.
- Extra hours need no advance warning.
- You must make it to at least one strike.
- You must complete 10 hours before mid-Semester.
- The grade for lab will be no higher than F if any lab hours are not completed on time.
- Don't come dressed for tea. Come dressed for recess. You will be sent home if you are dressed inappropriately- INCLUDING SHOES.

**In-Class Projects** (Flatage Construction, Platform Construction, Scene Painting, Drafting, etc.) - Any project NOT finished within the class times must be finished OUTSIDE of Class. (10% of your final grade)

**Final Project** – You’ll have a choice of final projects. You might draft a major piece of scenery and do a painter’s elevation on what it would look like. You might sew a costume piece or other sewing project. You might design and draft a simple light plot. See the final project handout for ideas. (20% of your Final Grade)

**Class Participation/Attendance:** Work done IN CLASS, and discussions in class will make up the majority of information needed to complete your projects. Therefore, attendance is exceedingly important. If you are absent, 1/3 of a letter grade will be subtracted from your FINAL GRADE for each hour of class missed over 3 hours. If you arrive after attendance is taken you will be considered absent. You will be held responsible for all information discussed during all class periods. Should you have questions or need further clarification of material covered in class or in the readings, don't hesitate to talk to your instructor (This is true even if you didn’t miss class). **If, however, you have missed a class without a valid excuse, don't ask your instructor to explain the material. It only makes him angry.** In addition, should you need to miss a class for some pre-arranged reason, you must make arrangements with the instructor before the class is missed. You must have a legitimate excused absence to reschedule a due date, which must be done BEFORE the absence. The Final Project due date can not be rescheduled. (10% of your Final Grade)

**Grading:**

Due to the nature of the projects some of the grading in this class is *subjective*. There will be standards that govern this grading. Merely completing the assigned task or hours is what I consider average work, or a “C.” Going the extra mile, completing assignments with enthusiasm or emulating the examples of designs seen in the text and in class, will most likely lead to a “B.” Only extraordinary work will be considered for an “A.”

- Some projects require working in GROUPS. All group members are expected to pull their own weight, and those that don't will be treated accordingly. ALL group members will receive the same grade, except under extraordinary circumstances.
- Some of the class will be conducted on the stage or in the shop and require that you work with tools. Please dress in clothing that is appropriate for the shop environment. Failure to do so will result in a LOWERED Classwork Grade.

**Due Dates:**

All projects or other assignments are due in class on the date listed in the syllabus. All projects not turned in on time will receive a grade of “F." This can be raised to a "F"(50) by turning the project in before the last week of class. Only excused absences will be grounds for accepting work late.

Any student in this class who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me as quickly as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate his or her educational opportunities. To be eligible to receive accommodations, a student with disabilities must register with the Office for Disability Support Services in the Higgins Academic Center.

The College’s Code of Academic Integrity sets out a list of prohibited behavior, including plagiarism, cheating, and tampering with or destroying College property (including computers in computer labs). The most common act of academic misconduct is plagiarism, which is defined "Passing off a source's information, ideas, or words as your own by omitting to acknowledge that source—an act of lying, cheating, and stealing." (Gordon Harvey, Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students) Any student who commits a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity will be subject to the policies and procedures outlined in *Fishtales*. It is each student's responsibility to read and be familiar with the Code.
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Calendar (Subject To Change)

**Week of September 5**
Introduction/ Theatre Architecture
- **Read:** Chapter 4

**September 12**
Reading Theatre Drawings; Tools, Materials
- **Read:** Chapter 8

**September 19**
Meet in the Shop. Flatage Project/ Platform Project
- **Due:** Tool handout
- **Read:** Chapter 9

**September 26**
Color in pigment and paint/ Begin Painting project. Wear painting clothes
- **Read:** Chapter 10
- **Due:** Vocabulary handout
- **See:** *The Bald Soprano* at RMC

**October 3**
Finish Paint Project
- **Due:** October 4th- Turn in Sketchbook/Journal

**October 10**
Costume Crafts
- **Read:** Chapter 17
- **Due:** Designer/Tech Presentation Topic

**October 17**
Fall Break, Costume Crafts

**October 24**
Electricity, Lamps, Reflectors and Lenses
- **Read:** Chapters 13 & 14

**October 31**
Control and Advanced Lighting Technology
- **Due:** Before November 1st – First Professional Critique
- **Due:** Half of shop hours finished
- **Due:** Designer/Tech Presentation Bibliography

**November 7**
Principals & Elements of Design
- **Read:** Chapter 2 & 5
- **Due:** Turn in Sketchbook/Journal

**November 14**
Drafting
- **Read:** Chapter 20
- **See:** *The Fantasticks* at RMC

**November 21**
CAD
- **Due:** Hand Drafted Project
  (Happy Turkey Day!)

**November 28**
CAD; Designer/Tech Presentations
- **Due:** Designer/Tech Presentation
- **Due:** CAD Drafted Project

**December 5**
Theatre as a Profession
- **Due:** CAD Elevation Drawings
- **Due:** Before Dec 9th – Second Professional Critique
- **Due:** Turn in Sketchbook/Journal
- **See:** *A Christmas Carol* at R-MC

**December 13**
Final Projects due
8:30am