

THEA 142 – Elementary Stagecraft

Instructor: Chris Kittrell

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Class Times: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30a – 10:20a, Room: TA-135

Lab Times: M/W 1p – 3p, M/W 3p – 5p, T/Th 3p – 5p, Room: TA-128

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30a – 12:00p, Room: TA-125

Office Phone: 562.985.4372

Objective:

The course is designed to provide information on the scope, tools, materials, and practices of stagecraft today. Areas to be covered include the evolution of theatrical architecture, fundamentals of scenic design and production drafting, and principals of scenic construction. The course uses formal lectures, group discussions, outside projects, and practical lab sessions to cover the material. Upon successful completion of the class, you should be able to produce a basic scene design, be able to communicate the design to others, and be able to build, paint, and install basic elements of stage scenery.

Text:

The Stagecraft Handbook, by Daniel A Ionazzi

BeachBoard:

Some information regarding this class can be found on CSULB's BeachBoard website. A CSULB internet account is required for access.

Fine Print:

It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in advance of the need for accommodation for a University verified disability. Should you need accommodation for a University verified disability for testing or any other activity required for successful completion of the course, contact the instructor in the first two weeks of the semester to discuss the situation. A student may not withdraw from the class after the University census date except for a verified medical reason or family emergency. Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated.

Crew Assignment:

Each student is required to complete a stage crew on a Players or CalRep production during the semester. Attendance at all technical and dress rehearsals is required as is the satisfactory completion of all assigned crew duties for the run of the show and attendance at strike. The minimum number of performance calls varies from show to show but is normally 8 or 9. The exact schedule of crew calls will be worked out by the Stage Manager, Crew Supervisor, and the crew members during the tech rehearsal process. Crew signups will be completed during the first week of the semester. The stage crew assignment fulfills the running crew requirement listed in the CSU Catalog. Students must enroll in the appropriate Activity Unit to receive credit for their crew assignment. If you cannot fulfill the crew assignment or fail to enroll in the Activity Unit you will have to withdraw from this class and reenroll when you can complete a crew.

Grading:

Students will be graded on the basis of tests and quizzes, projects, lab, crew, and attendance. A running point total will be kept and used to determine the final grade in the class.

Tests and Quizzes (275 points). To obtain full credit, tests and quizzes must be completed at the time and date scheduled unless previous arrangements have been made or the absences were excused or were caused by illness or unforeseen catastrophes. If you are unable to be present for a scheduled test, leave a message via e-mail. Tests or quizzes missed without a valid reason may be made up but the total point value of the test or quiz will be reduced by up to 25 percent.

Lab (80 points). Lab will be graded on the basis of attendance, preparation, and attitude during those labs devoted to work on the department's productions. If you miss lab or if you arrive more than 10 minutes late, 5 points will be subtracted. However, for each hour worked outside of your normal lab time you will earn 2 points (but you may not exceed 100 points total for lab).

The second and third labs of the semester are devoted to safety related topics. **Attendance at these two labs is mandatory.** Any student who misses one or both of these labs may be dropped from the class.

You are expected to attend the lab for which you are registered. You need to make arrangements with the instructor if you need to attend a different lab, otherwise you may be marked as absent from lab.

Lab Projects (60 points). While not working on departmental productions during lab hours you will have several practical scenic construction projects to complete. Projects are expected to be finished during lab hours and you will receive instruction and supervision during these periods.

Production Reports (50 points). These papers are written analyses of the scenic designs for any two of the mainstage productions mounted each semester. These can include *The Saint Plays*, *Machinal*, or *Britanicus*. Because of the scenic design constraints placed on the productions mounted in the Players Theatre, these productions generally do not meet the requirements for this assignment.

It is important that you view each production as an audience member and not as a cast or crew member. To do an evaluation on a show that you are crewing, you should make arrangements to attend a performance that you are not required to work. The due date for a paper is the Thursday after a production closes. 10 points will be deducted if paper is turned in late. Papers must be typed and will be graded not only for content but also for form. Proper spelling and punctuation must be observed. Production reports are expected to be at least two full pages in length.

Final Design Project (100 points). Your final project will be the complete scenic design for one of two plays either *The Goat* by Edward Albee or *Blasted* by Sarah Kane. The assignment will include a scenic white model and hand-drafted scenic groundplan. The plays and your design concepts will be discussed in class. To obtain full credit for the project, all objectives of the assignment must be met, the project must be turned in on time, and the project must display a satisfactory level of artistic merit and refinement. The total point value of the project will be reduced by up to 50 percent if the project is turned in after the due date.

Attendance (100 points). Attendance is strongly recommended as in-class demonstrations and discussions are crucial in understanding the material. Experience has shown that good grades are strongly correlated with attendance, practice and participation. Students who do not come to class quickly get behind. Attendance will be reflected in your Class Participation grade and unexcused absences will lower that grade. If you arrive after role has been taken, it is your responsibility to speak to the instructor after class so you will be marked as arriving late. Those students in attendance from the beginning of the class will be given full credit while those arriving late will only be awarded partial credit for the day.

CSULB attendance policy can be found at: <http://www.csulb.edu/~senate/Policies/01-01.html>

Required Materials:

The Stagecraft Handbook, by Daniel A Ionazzi

The Goat by Edward Albee or *Blasted* by Sarah Kane

Basic model building and drafting materials (a list of materials will be provided)

Tape measure, wooden pencils and safety glasses (required for Lab)

Withdrawal Policy:

It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from classes. Instructors have no obligation to withdraw students who do not attend courses, and may choose not to do so.

The deadline to withdraw from a class without a "W" is stated in the official Schedule of Classes. Withdrawal from a course after that date requires the signature of the instructor and the department chair, and is permissible only for serious and compelling reasons. A "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

DURING THE FINAL THREE WEEKS OF INSTRUCTION WITHDRAWALS ARE NOT PERMITTED EXCEPT IN CASES SUCH AS ACCIDENT OR SERIOUS ILLNESS WHERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSING THE WITHDRAWAL ARE CLEARLY BEYOND THE STUDENT'S CONTROL. THE CAUSE MUST BE DOCUMENTED. ORDINARILY, WITHDRAWALS IN THIS CATEGORY INVOLVE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY. YOU WILL NEED THE APPROVAL OF THE COLLEGE DEAN AS WELL AS THAT OF THE CLASS INSTRUCTOR AND THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON FOR EACH CLASS YOU DROP.

Program Structure:

The course is structured with lectures and practical demonstrations. Don't assume the following is carved in stone, the sequence may differ based on the amount of time spent on each subject. Please read the appropriate chapters as the semester progresses, material covered in the book will be included in any tests given during the semester.

WEEK 1 (1/29, 1/31)

Chapter 3

Intro to Elementary Stagecraft
Shop Safety and Tools

WEEK 2 (2/5, 2/7)

Hand Tools

Safety and Tool Quiz

WEEK 3 (2/12, 2/14)

Chapter 1

Development of the Modern Theatre:
Greeks to 20th Century
VIDEO: *Sing Faster*

WEEK 4 (2/19, 2/21)

Chapter 2

Modern Theatre Architecture:
Development of the Proscenium Theatre

WEEK 5 (2/26, 2/28)

Theatre Equipment
Counterweight Fly Systems
VIDEO: *Into The Woods*

WEEK 6 (3/4, 3/6)

Chapter 5

Materials for Stage Use: Wood
Materials for Stage Use: Metal

WEEK 7 (3/11, 3/13)

History and Wood Quiz

Materials for Stage Use: Plastics
Materials for Stage Use: Fabric

WEEK 8 (3/18, 3/20)

Chapter 4

Principles of Scenic Design
Discuss *Saint Plays*, paper due 3/20

WEEK 9 (3/25, 3/27)

Drafting the Design
Model-making Skills
Discuss *Machinal*, paper due 3/25

WEEK 10 (4/8, 4/10)

Midterm Review

Midterm

WEEK 11 (4/15, 4/17)

Chapter 6

Scenic Construction:
Walls, window and doors
Platforms, stairs and wagons
Discuss *Trojan Women*

WEEK 12 (4/22, 4/24)

Scenic Construction:
Curtains, masking and drops
Moving Scenery

WEEK 13 (4/29, 5/1)

Scene Painting
Properties

WEEK 14 (5/6, 5/8)

Completing the Design Package

WEEK 15 (5/13, 5/15)

Completing the Design Package
Discuss *Britannicus*