

Introduction to Production Design 247 Professor Kade Mendelowitz

Film and Performing Arts 247. 3 Credits. Tuesdays & Thursdays. Fine Arts room 101 ("Green Room")

Prerequisites: None, though THR 215 (Dramatic Literature) and THR 241 (Basic Stagecraft) are recommended.

Spring Semester 2018 University of Alaska Fairbanks. E-mail: K.Mendelowitz@alaska.edu

Office: 223A (by KUAC) or in the shop. Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00-1:45pm & by appointment

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Course Description:

Exploration and application of the elements of design as they relate to theatre, dance, film, video, and other art forms. Exploring the development of the technician's craft and the current practices involved in the production of the production environment. Students will be offered both a classroom and actual production experience.

Students will be exposed to all areas of theatre and film technology currently in use at the University of Alaska of Fairbanks, as well as receiving an understanding of technologies available in other theatre environments.

Course Goals:

- By completing project assignments, the student will begin to develop a technical resume and portfolio.
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Student Learning Outcomes:

- Student will be able to analyze a play script (Theatre) or screenplay (Film) with the purpose of developing a design concept for that work. (Written Paper)
 - Student will be able to articulate how their developed design concept will support and enhance a production.
 - Student will be able to create a groundplan (drafting) and renderings (perspective drawing or painting) representing the 3D environment for a set (location).
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Required Text:

- What an Art Director Does by Ward Preston ISBN-13: 978-1879505186 Price: \$12.61
 - Mainstage Play Script title unknown at the time of this writing; you will read and develop a design concept for whatever the mainstage production for the semester is.
 - Macbeth by William Shakespeare ISBN-13: 978-1599867922 Price: \$5.99 **Note: Many editions of this play are available, any copy of the original text is acceptable for this class.** We will use this script as a basis for developing a concept for a stage play and film adaptation/design (basis for Concept Papers II & III).
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Required Materials:

- Pencils (standard 2B)
- Architect's scale rule
- Eraser
- Erasing Shield
- 45 and 30/60 degree triangles (one at least 8-10" long)
- Sketch Pad (at least 11x14)
- Gauche paints (5 or more, set of tubes)
- Assortment of small watercolor brushes
- Paint palette

Digital component:

You will be expected (aka: requirement) to have a UAF e-mail account with **Blackboard** access. Even if you do not use this address as your primary e-mail account, you should set it as a forward to the address of your choosing.

Viewing Productions and Production Work:

Students are expected to see and be prepared to discuss this semester's Mainstage productions. To aid in show viewing, students will be allowed one complimentary ticket through the box office - and are invited to the final dress rehearsal before opening of each show.

You will be writing a paper and then we will be discussing the design for this play (title and specific schedule unknown at the time of this writing) — so be sure to see the production.

Grading:

This course will be graded including +/- values

Concept paper I _____	5%
Concept paper II _____	10%
Concept paper III _____	20%
Painting Projects _____	20%
Design Drawings _____	10%
Mainstage Production Design Analysis _	10%
Final Project (Macbeth designs) _____	25%



Class attendance and participation is expected. After two unexcused absences, your grade will be affected by 5points per absence. Two tardies (for each two times you are late) will be counted the equivalent of being absent.

Note: C- (1.7) shall be the minimum acceptable grade that undergraduate students may receive for courses to count toward the major or minor degree requirements, or as a prerequisite for another course

The Office of Disability Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and ensures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials.

I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (208 WHITAKER BLDG. 474-5655) to provide **reasonable** accommodation to students with disabilities.

Concept Papers (We will also discuss this in class for clarification) 3+ paragraphs (this example uses the 2-page play "Foxhole" as a basis — so that it's very short to read, and everyone can understand a single example).

Paragraph one is a quick play analysis versus a synopsis. Analysis is a description of what you feel the play is about, as compared to a synopsis which is a quick telling of what happened. Example analysis: *Foxhole* is about the unrelenting ways of war. Each side is clear about its objectives and is willing to do anything to win.

Don't give a synopsis like ... *Foxhole* is about two soldiers trying to kill each other until a plane comes and blows them both to bits. We all know this story, we read the play, too. The question here is: what did the play mean to you - not what happened.

Paragraph two is a metaphor you can use to inspire / help visualize what the design for the play should be like.

The lighting for *Foxhole* is like the lighting for a nationally televised outdoor tennis championship. The sun streams clearly from above, showing every detail of the action. Occasionally we cut to the commentator's booth, where we can see the court dimly in the background. We temporarily focus on what the commentator has to say until we return to the action.

In paragraph three (or however many paragraphs it takes) describe how the first two paragraphs work together with your vision of the design.

It is a very clear and hot sunny day with the sun beating down from above right -- we can clearly see everything that is happening. The action is exposed much like it is in a professional tennis match. The sun is slightly yellow and dry -- harsh. There is no escape from it. There are strong shadows, but everything is still visible. When Joe or Mohammed step down stage it is as if he is leaving the action temporarily -- when the world is put on hold, much like a sports commentator who talks about and examines what we just saw.

A little short, but you should get the idea.

Use descriptive terms. Really picture it in your mind and get excited about it!

Here is an alternative example concept paper.

Foxhole is about the terrible misunderstandings between people. Even two people who are standing just 10 feet apart have no idea about what the other person's ideology or life is about.

The lighting for *Foxhole* is like a nighttime fireworks display. There are many small, fast flash/bursts of color, with occasional large, dramatic, grandiose explosions intermingled.

The moon glows a brilliant sea green as an intricate fireworks display is presented. There are many small flashes and bursts sporadically and unexpectedly throughout the space. The air is full of smoke from the fireworks that have already exploded. Joe and Mohammed are controlling the display and, occasionally, need to pause to reload the fireworks. In the end, the grand finale outshines them both.

Review:

Both of these are short but acceptable examples of two very different ideas behind the play and the lighting that would support them. One of the chief questions you should consider when reviewing your concept paper is whether you have described a clear image of what the play actually looks like. Both of these do.

The second lighting concept has chosen to ignore the playwright's comments and shifted the action to be nighttime. Clearly, this would need to be discussed with the director very early in production meetings -- and may not fly. When you work on productions, there is nothing wrong with discussing these types of possibilities with the director and other designers. It is a collaborative process. Sometimes ideas that might not seem obvious or

embraced will spring other ideas in conversation that might not have been considered otherwise. I encourage you to share these kind of left-field ideas with your production teams.

For the sake of these assignments, if you were doing them for my class, you would be acting as both director and designer. As long as you can “back up” and explain your ideas clearly, I would find them acceptable. So in the case of my class, I’d be acting more like the producer -- with editorial powers, but wanting to give you latitude.

Rubric for Grading sketches / paintings / final project design:

Elements of Design: Line, Texture, Color, Shape / Form, Value, Space

Principles of Design: Repetition, Balance, Emphasis, Contrast, Unity

- A: Planned carefully, made several sketches, and showed an awareness of the elements and principles of design; chose color scheme carefully, used space effectively.
- B: The artwork shows that the student applied the principles of design while using one or more elements effectively; showed an awareness of filling the space adequately.
- C: The student did the assignment adequately, yet it shows lack of planning and little evidence that an overall composition was planned.
- D: The assignment was completed and turned in, but showed little evidence of any understanding of the elements and principles of art; no evidence of planning.
- F: The student did the minimum or the artwork was never completed.

Creativity/Originality

- A: The student explored several choices before selecting one; generating many ideas; tried unusual combinations or changes on several ideas; made connections to previous knowledge; demonstrated understanding problem solving skills.
- B: The student tried a few ideas before selecting one, or based his or her work on someone else’s idea; made decisions after referring to one source; solved the problem in logical way.
- C: The student tried an idea, and turned out adequately, but it lacked originality; substituted “symbols” for personal observation; might have copied work.
- D: The student fulfilled the assignment, but gave no evidence of trying anything unusual.
- F: The student showed no evidence of original thought.

Effort/Perseverance

- A: The project was continued until it was as complete as the student could make it; gave it effort far beyond that required; showed pride in going well beyond the requirement.
- B: The student worked hard and completed the project, but with a little more effort it might have been outstanding.
- C: The student finished the project, but it could have been improved with more effort; adequate interpretation of the assignment, but lacking finish; chose an easy project and did it indifferently.
- D: The project was completed with minimum effort.
- F: The student did not finish the work adequately.

Craftsmanship/Skill/Consistency

- A: The artwork was beautiful and patiently done; it was as good as hard work could make it.
- B: With a little more effort, the work could have been outstanding; lacks the finishing touches.
- C: The student showed average craftsmanship; adequate, but not as good as it could have been, a bit careless.
- D: The student showed below average craftsmanship; lack of pride in finished work.
- F: The student showed poor craftsmanship; evidence of laziness or lack of understanding.

Scheduling:

Because this class is somewhat related to the production schedule for each specific show and semester, the scheduling of readings, projects, etc. will be assigned through the class - and is subject to change, although I have made a best effort to share deadline dates with you below.

Tuesdays	Thursdays
	9/3 Lecture: What is "Production Design"
9/8 <u>What an Art Director Does (Chapter 2)</u> Lecture: The History of Art Direction	9/10 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 3</u> Lecture: The Art Department
9/15 <u>What an Art Director Does (Chapter 5)</u> Lecture: Character Breakdowns	9/17 Lecture: Script Analysis
9/22 <u>Reading: Mainstage Play Script</u> Drawing 1-point perspective introduced (in class drawing day; bring sketch pad, pencil, eraser)	9/24 Concept Paper 1 (Mainstage) due. In class discussion of design concepts.
9/29 2-point perspective explored. (in class drawing day; bring sketch pad, pencil, eraser)	10/1 Lecture/Demonstration: Elements of Design
10/6 2-point perspective drawing due. In class workshop: Paper sculptures	10/8 Lecture: "The World of the Play"
10/13 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 9</u> Lecture & Demonstration: Set Decoration	10/15 <u>Reading: Macbeth</u> In class discussion of Macbeth
10/20 Concept Paper 2 due. In class discussion of design concepts.	10/22 <u>Media: Color (online resource)</u> Introduction to Color
10/27 Bring paint palette. Paint, brushes and paper will be supplied. Introduction to Paint: in class workshop	10/29 <u>What an Art Director Does Reading: Chapter 6</u> Sketch for concept 2 due. in class presentation.
11/3 Color Chips due Lecture: From stage to screen: Making <i>Macbeth</i> a movie	11/5 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 5</u> Lecture: Locations (for film work)
11/10 Discussing concept implementation	11/12 Analysis Paper Due — Mainstage Design In-class discussion of Mainstage play.
11/17 Monochromatic painting assignment due. In-class lecture/demonstration: creating a character "Look Book": costume design alternative	11/19 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 11</u> Discussion of Special Effects
11/24 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 13</u> Discussion of Production Design	11/25 Thanksgiving (no classes)
12/1 Complementary painting assignment due. Lecture: Clothing Makes the Character	12/3 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 14</u> Discussion of Filmmaking Team
12/8 Revised sketches for concept 3 due. Review of Concept Implementation	12/10 <u>What an Art Director Does Chapter 16</u> Lecture: Ten Commandments of Art Direction
	12/17 Final Project due: 3:30pm