

THE107 – Stagecraft

Syllabus

Instructor: Don Schneider

Office: Armstrong B39 (inside scene shop)

Office Hours: 11:00am-12:00pm TTh

Office Phone: 319-895-4443

Cell Phone: 319-530-0559

Email: dschneider@cornellcollege.edu

Course Meeting Times

Classes are 9am-12pm MWF & 9am-11am TTh. Classes will begin with lecture in Armstrong 24, then will move to the stage, shop, or ancillary spaces for further lecture and/or demonstrations. Classes will conclude with shop lab time. In addition to the scheduled course meeting times, 6 hours outside class times will be scheduled in 2-hour blocks by the student for practical production experience on our current show.

Required Text

The text for this course is Scene Design and Stage Lighting 10th edition by R. Craig Wolf and Dick Block. Daily readings will be assigned, and are to be completed before coming to class. Additional materials will be distributed throughout the course.

Required Supplies

All students will supply their own impact-resistant safety goggles or glasses, a 25' tape measure, and a pencil. All three must accompany the student to each lab. They may be purchased at Mount Vernon Ace, or your preferred hardware store. Make sure you do not buy splash goggles. Some tape measures are marked with fractions. This will aid in your accuracy if you are unused to this tool.

The scenery construction project will require one #2 pine 1x4x8' board, and one 1/4" lauan panel to be cut to 1'-0" x 2'-0". You may purchase this yourself from Gordon Lumber, Menards, or your preferred lumber yard, or you may purchase it through the scene shop for \$5. If you chose the scene shop option, you will need to pay for materials before receiving a grade.

General Information

This course will utilize Moodle to provide information necessary to the successful completion of the class. Some of this information may include outlines or notes from the day's lecture, copies of PowerPoint presentations, links to useful websites and various online resources. Please remember that this information is provided to aid you in your study process, and not to replace the regular course readings and regular attendance. All material included in required readings and/or covered in class is potential material for quizzes and examinations.

Theatre contains a great deal of vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to you. Words specific to a discipline are known as "terms of art". Their discipline-specific definitions may sound contradictory to its plain meaning. Worse, theatre vocabulary contains a lot of slang that is often regional, and sometimes specific to a particular venue. You likely will hear me use a term you do not understand, and that may not be in the book. When this happens, please ask what I mean. Do not think you are the only one who does not know the vocabulary. You aren't.

Shop Policies

You must show up on time and in proper attire. Wear clothes you do not mind getting dirty or paint on them. They must be close-fitting, to keep out of machinery. They must be tough to help protect

from abrasions. Skirts, utilkilts, or other clothing with flowing material that can get caught in machinery is not allowed. Jeans and t-shirts (long or short sleeved) are ideal. Open toes shoes are unsafe, and unacceptable. Jewelry should be kept at a minimum, if any at all, and long hair tied back. You will not be allowed to work in the shop if you are not properly attired. Eye protection must be worn at all times, and hearing protection and/or dust masks as appropriate. We will go into more detail on safety during the initial tool qualification. For safety reasons, no shop work is permitted without Scott or me present.

Course Description

A theatrical production can be a seemingly simple affair of two people on a bare stage on one end of the scale, to a pyrotechnic extravaganza on the other. Regardless, everything that takes place backstage requires thought, planning, and skill in execution. The practical skills used in the creation of the various visual elements on stage, including scenery, props, lighting, costumes and more, are collectively known as stagecraft. This course will examine the organization of technical theatre, and explore how choices are made and implemented from concept to color to construction method. We will have a basic introduction to tools and methods used in scenic construction and lighting, which can be further developed in advanced coursework.

Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, the student will have gained an understanding of relationships in live theatre production, how and why theatre works from the physical standpoint (architecturally) as well as interpersonally between the various participants, particularly designers, in a theatrical production.

The student will develop practical skills in theatrical construction methods, and will have an understanding of tool and material choice in problem solving, and the impact those choices have on a realized production.

The student will be able to identify architectural components, common scenic elements and stage machinery, and current lighting instruments used in theatrical productions, and their function.

The student will gain proficiency in the hang and focusing of lighting instruments, and understand the purpose behind choice in instrument type, location, focus and cuing for a production.

The student will gain an understanding and appreciation of the roles played by the unseen participants in the creation of a theatrical event.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, reasoning, and vocation (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/about-cornell/mission/index.shtml>).

This Course further supports the Learning Outcomes of the Department of Theatre & Dance of Intercultural Literacy & Inquiry, Knowledge & Application, Collaboration, Vocation, and Well-Being (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/theatre/mission-outcomes/index.shtml>).

Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College

deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in *The Catalogue*, under the heading “Academic Honesty.”

Students With Disabilities

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

Attendance

Theatre is a collaborative discipline, and stagecraft a hands-on subject. Collaboration cannot happen in a vacuum, and tactile learning does not emerge from a book. Attendance is therefore mandatory, and will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to make sure the instructor records your attendance. Missing more than 15 minutes of class is considered an absence. If you are late, it is your responsibility to make sure your attendance is recorded by the instructor. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of your final grade by one third a letter (B becomes B-, B- becomes C+). If you have an excused absence, you should make arrangements with the instructor prior to the absence, or immediately after in the case of an emergency. Excused absences may include serious illness, death in the family, school-sanctioned event, etc. Final approval of an excused absence rests with the instructor. Email is the preferred contact method, as it provides a means to document the request and approval of the excused absence. Grades will also be lowered by one letter grade if the six hours of practical production experience are not completed.

Grading

You will be evaluated through class/lab participation, written quizzes and exams, and several practical exercises/projects. Exams and quizzes may include multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions and problems, as well as practical problem-solving.

Graded Events:

2 quizzes (25 points each)	50 points
2 exams (75 points each)	150 Points
Scenic construction project	50 points
Painting project	50 points
Rent Response Paper	25 Points
Drafting Project	25 points
Knot tying practical	50 points
Lighting exercise	50 points
Props project	50 points
Total Possible	500 points

All grading is based on a 100-point scale:

A 94-100	C+ 77-79
A- 90-93	C 74-76
B+ 87-89	C- 70-73
B 84-86	D 60-69
B- 80-83	F 00-59

Week #1

Monday, 10/22 Class Intro, tour of spaces. Read *The Glass Menagerie* (on your own).
Tuesday, 10/23 Scene Shop, Tools & Equipment/Building the Scenery (Chapters 7 & 8)
Wednesday, 10/24 Building the Scenery cont./Handling Scenery (Chapter 10)
Thursday, 10/25 Introduction/Scene Design & the Theatre Space (Chapters 1 & 2)
Friday, 10/26 TBD

Week #2

Monday, 10/29 Color in the Design/Painting Scenery (Chapters 5 & 9)
Tuesday, 10/30 Design Process/Drafting the Design (Chapters 4 & 6) **QUIZ #1**
Wednesday, 10/31 Stage Properties (Chapter 11)
Thursday, 11/01 TBD, **Scenic & Painting Projects Due**
Friday, 11/02 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week #3

Monday, 11/05 Introduction to Stage Lighting/Distribution (Chapters 14 & 15)
Tuesday, 11/06 Color and Light/Lighting Fixtures (Chapters 16 & 17), **Rent Response Paper Due**
Wednesday, 11/07 Design: Light Plot, Paperwork & Prod./Power Dist. & Cont. (Chapters 20 & 21)
Thursday, 11/08 TBD, **Drafting Project Due**
Friday, 11/09 **Knot Tying Practical, Quiz #2**

Week #4

Monday, 11/12 **Lighting Exercise** Stage Lighting & Electricity/Light Sources (Chapters 22 & 23)
Tuesday, 11/13 Sound & Music In Theatre/Sound Systems & Equipment (Chapters 26 & 27)
Wednesday, 11/14 **FINAL EXAM, Props Project Due**

This schedule is intended to be a guide, and may be modified during the course.