**Theatre 231A** **Costume Construction**Fall 2014 Session 1433 Units 262793RT TH 11:00-12:20pm SMG 601Instructor Howard SchmittOffice HoursMon 10:00, PED 114 E

SYLLABUS**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**This class is a historical survey of the theory and practice used for producing stage costumes. It both surveys the artifacts (images) of world culture, and presents examples of costumes that have been constructed for stage productions. Its goal is to familiarize students with stage costuming practices as well as sources of historical research for understanding and visualizing dramatic literature.**METHODOLOGY**This is a presentation/lecture course that emphasizes cultural and visual literacy. It presents images of clothing from cavemen to Kate Middleton. We will look at both the pictorial record of clothing as well as stage reproductions of period costumes. We will have in class demonstrations on the aesthetics and the wearing of stage costumes. Students will have the opportunity to try on selected costumes and discuss their use in stage performance. Though familiarity with some terminology is expected, this class is primarily concerned with chronology, trends and influences in apparel and how costumes delineate character, define social structure and create ambiance in performance. Certain historical figures and fine artists are important to the history of dress. Fashion, like art, does not exist in a void; it reflects political, economic and cultural factors. We will also discuss clothing as it reflects a society’s idea of gender roles and celebrity. Nomenclature may, at times, provide insights into attitudes about style and fashion.

**REQUIRED READING**James Laver and Amy de la Hoya, The Story of Art (fifth edition) paperback ISBN-13: 978-0500204122The text is available from the USC bookstore as well as Amazon.com Handouts will be provided when needed.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READING** Edward Maeder, ed, Hollywood and History, Costume Design in FilmThis book provides an example of the relationship between visual research and costume design in the entertainment industry. It also serves as an excellent example of critical writing on costuming practices. The USC library has several copies of the book and the costume shop has a copy. This book tends to be a useful guide to style and methodology in writing papers for this course. Copies of this book are available on amazon.com; sometimes at highly discounted prices.

**EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

This course will have an introductory written assignment, a midterm exam, an analytical paper and a final exam. Papers are expected to be printed out and turned in at the start of class on the due date. Exams must be taken on the scheduled date.

**Preliminary Writing Assignment** (2 - 3 pages)

Due Tuesday Sept 23

In order to have written material graded and returned prior to the mid–semester warning date, this course will have an introductory written assignment. The purpose of this assignment is for the instructor to assess students’ writing prior to the analytical paper.

View one of the following exhibits and write a response paper to the exhibit. The methodology of the paper should reflect the tone, terminology and critical approaches used in class lectures and demonstrations. The exhibits vary in whether they relate directly, or indirectly, to costume practices.

Television Costume Design Exhibit at FIDM

h<ttp://fidmmuseum.org/exhibitions/current/#8th-annual-o>utstanding-art-of-television-costume-design

The Pompei Exhibit at the California Science Museum

<http://www.californiasciencecenter.org/Exhibits/>

SpecialExhibits/pompeii/pompeii.php

The Antiquities Collection at LACMA

[www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org)

The Getty Villa

<http://www.getty.edu/visit/villa/>

This assignment will be worth 25 points with an additional 5 points for promptness. (Late assignments and those electronically submitted will not receive the full 5 points for promptness.)

**Midterm** Thursday Oct 16

The midterm exam will cover class lectures as well as the textbook, topics from the written assignment & handouts. The midterm exam must be taken at the scheduled time.

The midterm will have between 125 and 175 points.

**Analytical Paper** (5 - 7 pages)

Due Tuesday Nov 25

This paper is an analysis of the use of period style in costume design found in film. Choose one of the four film titles listed below:

Ben Hur

(1925, 1959, 2010)

Romeo & Juliet

(1936, 1954, 1968, 1996?, 2013)

Cyrano De Bergerac

(1950, 1990 in French)

Madame Bovary

(1947 in Spanish, 1949, 1975, 1991 in French, 2000)

Choose two versions, made in different decades, of the title you have selected.

Discuss the visual approach of the film. Compare and contrast the style of the two films. Analyze relevant choices made in clothing and hairstyles. If it’s an area of your personal interest, comment on the interrelationship between the costumes and the settings or lighting approach. You may want to observe how the prevailing aesthetic of the decade in which the film was made is apparent in the visual images in the film. (Books such as Hollywood and History will help in understanding a decade’s prevailing aesthetic.) It may be interesting to note why a particular story or piece of literature appeals to a particular generation. Feel free to note when the designers intentionally (or *unintentionally*) departed from "historical accuracy", and examine why this decision would have been made. Be careful about referring to design choices as mistakes, what is important is to understand why historical dress is adapted for film costuming.

This is not a paper about value judgments. *No one really cares whether or not you liked the films.* Rather, look at how the design and the use of history affect the viewer's perception of the literature. One goal is to understand each film in terms of its own merits; it is not desirable to conclude that one version is better than another. The visual style may bring out certain themes of the story while de-emphasizing other themes. Examine these issues through the comparison of two visions of the same piece. Be careful when comparing a black and white film to a color one. Your discussion should reflect an understanding of the aesthetics of each medium, NOT a preference for one of them.Also, be careful not to slam older versions of a story, the object of this exercise is to understand the conventions and aesthetics of the film. One thing to remember is that the reason almost any 50+ year old film is available today, is because it has some notable merits or popularity. (Mediocre art is not usually preserved.)Reading the essays in Edward Maeder's Hollywood & History should help define the issues and approach for an analytical paper on costume design.This paper is often a four step project. 1. Watch the first film and take notes. 2. Watch the second film and take notes. 3. Research and rough draft. 4. Final draft.

The paper will have 100 points, with an additional 10 points for promptness.

**Final Exam**

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 8-10 a.m.

The exam will cover class lectures, discussions, textbook, assignments & handouts. It will be cumulative, comprehensive and rigorous. The final must be taken at the scheduled time.

The final will have between 150 and 225 points.

**CRITERIA FOR GRADING**

Students doing work of C- and below on the midterm, will receive mid-semester warnings.

Class attendance is expected. (Up to 10 participation points will be given.)

The points accumulated on each exercise (assignments and exams, participation) will be totaled. Grades will be given, based on the sum of the accumulated points with allowances for the highs, lows, mean, median, and standard deviation for each exercise. When assignments are returned, we will discuss the letter grading ranges associated with point totals on that exercise.

***Grading Scale for SDA:* A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

**CELL PHONE AND PAGER ETIQUETTE**Please turn cellular phones and beepers off (or switch to vibrate mode) before class. Using cell phones in class is the equivalent of being absent and is disruptive to the rest of the class.**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Statement for Students with Disabilities**Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) HYPERLINK "mailto:ability@usc.edu" ability@usc.edu.**Statement on Academic Integrity** USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ( HYPERLINK "http://www.usc.edu/scampus" www.usc.edu/scampus or HYPERLINK "http://scampus.usc.edu" http://scampus.usc.edu) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis** In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**Catalogue Description**

**THTR 231ab Costume Construction (3-3, FaSp)** Historical survey, theory and practice in construction of costume, emphasis on period and style. *Recommended preparation:* THTR 125, THTR 201.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

week 1

Aug 26 Overview, Prehistory

read Laver, chapter one

Aug 28 Mesopotamian – Biblical - Egyptian

week 2 read Laver, chapter two

Sept 2 EgyptianSept 4 Crete, Greece

week 3 read Laver, chapter three

Sept 9 Roman, ByzantineSept 11 Dark Ages, Romanesque, Vikings

week 4 Sept 16 GothicSept 18 Gothic week 5 **Preliminary Writing Assignment** **Due;** read Laver, chapter fourSept 23 Early Italian RenaissanceSept 25 Renaissance, Tudor

week 6 Sept 30 ElizabethanOct 2 Jacobean - Cavalier week 7 read Laver, chapter fiveOct 7 Cavalier – Pilgrim

Oct 9 Restoration

week 8

Oct 14 ReviewOct 16 **MIDTERM EXAM** week 9 read Laver, chapter six

Oct 21 18th CenturyOct 23 French Revolution - Napoleon -Empire

week 10 read Laver, chapter seven Oct 28 19th Century

read Laver, chapter eight

Oct 30 Late 19th Century week 11

Nov 4 (Election Day) 19th Century - Russian styles

read Laver, chapter nine

Nov 6 Turn-of-the-Century, teensweek 12 read Laver, chapter ten Nov 11 20th Century - catalogues - fashion illustrationNov 13 20th Century - artists - photographersweek 13 Nov 18 20th Century - uniforms - formalwearNov 20 20th Century, 21st Century - First Ladies and Presidents week 14 **Analytical Paper** **Due**

Nov 25 20th Century, 21st Century - Celebrities, actors, Royalty, Nov 27 Thanksgiving Recess - no class week 15 Dec 2 African Fashions, Asian Fashions, Indian Fashions,

Jewish FashionsDec 4 Review **Finals week FINAL EXAM**  Tuesday, Dec. 16 8-10 a.m.