

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

Theatre 132a  
Fall 2014

Art of Theatrical Design  
Monday 10-11:50am

**Location:** PED 114b

**Instructor:** Sibyl Wickersheimer

**Office:** CWT 206

**Office Hours:** Tu/Th 11-12, by appointment

**Contact Info:** [swickers@usc.edu](mailto:swickers@usc.edu)

## Course Description and Overview

A guided student exploration of the fundamentals of applied design elements and their use as creative tools in the design process.

## Learning Objectives

To promote the development of the artistic process and theatrical design vocabulary of the individual within the environment of collaborative storytelling. Group discussions, collaborations, and hands-on projects will be important elements of the class while simultaneously creating a foundation for long term development of the students' own artistic process. Emphasis will also be placed on interdisciplinary and multimedia approaches to design, storytelling, interactive installation and performance.

## Class Meeting information

Assignments and Sketchbook assignments are to be completed prior to your arrival in class.

Turn off cell phones during all class sessions and put them away.

If your phone rings or is used during class, you may be excused for the remainder of the class period.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Students may want to set up a Design lab account. To be discussed.

### Texts:

#### Purchase:

*The Creative Habit*, Twyla Tharp

*A Director Prepares*, Anne Bogart

*Theatrical Design & Production*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. by J. Michael Gillette

#### View selections from the following texts on Blackboard:

*The Dramatic Imagination*, Robert Edmond Jones

*Unbalancing Acts*, Richard Foreman

*Bee Season*, Myla Goldberg

#### Additional Texts For Reference:

*Model Making: Materials & Methods* by David Neat

*Designer Drafting and Visualization*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Patricia Woodbridge

#### Film References:

Robert Irwin, *The Beauty of Questions*

From Start to Finish: De Wain Valentine's Gray Column

Gary Hustwit, *Objectified & Helvetica*

Terry Gilliam, *Brazil*

Ridley Scott, *Bladerunner*

Wim Wender, *Pina*

Julie Taymor, *Titus*

### **Supplies**

Digital camera

sketchbook - white paper – **no lines** – at least 8"x10" but can be larger

*Architectural* scale rule

25' or longer tape measure

metal, straight-edge ruler

Exacto knife and blades to fit size#11

Cutting matt – 18"x24"

Glue stick, white glue & hot glue

Tape(various)

### **Grading breakdown**

Work in class will be mostly 'hands on', project based work. All projects and assignments will be graded using a point system. Reading assignments will be expected to be completed before the following class session after they are assigned; there will be quizzes on the readings.

No late work (assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises) shall be accepted without penalty unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur. Grades will be lowered by at least one letter grade if they are not turned in by the assigned deadline.

If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned when midterm grades are due. I am available to discuss your progress in class. I encourage you to make an appointment to meet with me at least once during the semester.

Attendance may play a part in the student's final grade. If the student has more than 2 unexcused absences, overall grade will be lowered by 10%.

### **ASSIGNMENTS: TOTAL 500**

Metro Assignment (50pts)

Creative Autobiography (25pts)

Sketchbook & Image Library: (100pts) You will be required to do sketches and to accumulate a catalogue of images from a variety of sources. You will be given weekly guidelines and graded on the completeness and organization of the final collection.

Quizzes on assigned reading material. (3@50pts=150pts)

Narrative Storyboards (50pts)- Photography assignment.

Bee Season Model Project (50pts)- Collaborative presentation of model, plan view, and foley artifacts for a given text excerpt.

Final Project: Display/Presentation (50pts)- Design and Marketing strategy for imagined product.

Groups create an interactive installation related to the "marketing" of an imagined product.

Participation in class (25pts) Engaging in class discussions and willingness to respond to questions and ideas posed to the class.

### **Grading Criteria**

Point values are assigned to individual projects & assignments listed above. The final course grade is based on the following percentages of your accumulated points divided by the total points possible for all assignments (500):

The final course grade is based on the following scale:

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

**A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

### **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 (or to TA) 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](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto: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, (<http://www.usc.edu/scampus>) 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.

Course Calendar & Assignments (Subject to Change)

READING/MEDIA/EXERCISE

WEEK 1 Aug. 25	<b>SEEING:</b> Active and passive discovery. Promoting discovery and invention. What is 'the artistic process'? What is in your tool kit?	In class: Robert Irwin, <i>The Beauty of Questions</i> Assignment: Metro (due week 3) Read: Tharp, <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.1-90 Due week 3
WEEK 2	<b>NO CLASS : LABOR DAY</b>	
WEEK 3 Sept. 8	<b>WORK &amp; PROCESS</b> Organizing thoughts and ideas into concepts, themes, and relevant communication. Decision, selection, and the rigor of creative design. Expose the artistic process	In Class: collage exercise -text into image Due: Sketchbook Assignment #1 Read: <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.91-140
WEEK 4 Sept. 15	<b>VISUAL STORYTELLING</b> Harvesting details as visual dramaturgy. Digital Photography lecture/discussion and demo.	Exerpt from <i>Pina</i> , and Lauenstein Brothers, <i>Balance</i> Read: Tharp, <i>The Creative Habit</i> p.141-180 Assignment: writeCreative Autobiography
WEEK 5 Sept. 22	<b>TEXT ANALYSIS FOR DESIGN:</b> Nonverbal communication, breaking apart a story, Intro to Storyboarding More Digital Photography discussion and demo.	In class: Quiz on Creative Habit, pair up, begin work on 'Breath' Due: Sketchbook Assignment #2, Autobio. Assignment: Photo storyboards Due wk7
WEEK 6 Sept. 29	<b>PROCESS:</b> Individual & collaborative. <a href="http://fisher.usc.edu/exhibitions/drawn_to_language.html">http://fisher.usc.edu/exhibitions/drawn_to_language.html</a>	In class: field trip to Fisher Museum Due: Sketchbook Assignment #3 Read Ch. In Gillette (COLOR)
WEEK 7 Oct. 6	<b>VISUAL LITERACY &amp; COLOR</b> Pigment vs. Light <i>Watch Exerpts from Objectified and Helvetica</i>	In class: Present Photo Storyboards Due: Sketchbook Assignment #4 Read: Bogart, <i>A Director Prepares</i> (Intro, Preface, <i>Violence</i> )
WEEK 8 Oct. 13	<b>THE COLLABORATIVE CONDITION: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> Scenarios for maximizing the strengths of the group. Brainstorming, listening, and processing. Good habits and best practices.	Quiz on Bogart and Gillette reading Guest Panel of Designers & Directors Due: Sketchbook Assignment #5 Read: Jones, <i>The Dramatic Imagination</i> , Ch. 2
WEEK 9 Oct. 20	<b>DECONSTRUCTION AND ASSEMBLY:</b> Exercises in communicating theatrical ideas with various media and layered images. Intro to Orthographic Drawings & Scale.	In Class: Scale exercises Due: Sketchbook Assignment #6 Scaled Elevation, Plan, and Section drawings
WEEK 10 Oct. 27	<b>METAPHOR/STYLIZATION AND VISUAL VOCABULARY</b> Parallel values & understandings. Linear vs. Non-linear communication through character and movement. Historical and contemporary iconography and it's relevance to theatrical design.	Quiz on Jones reading Exerpts from: Gilliam, <i>Brazil</i> , Taymor, <i>Titus</i> Intro to Collage Artist projects Read: excerpt from Myla Goldberg, <i>Bee Season</i> Narrative Project assigned: Bee Season - due wk12
WEEK 11	<b>SOUND &amp; VISION</b>	Due: Sketchbook Assignment #7

Nov. 3	Exercise in composing space with sound.	Exerpts from <i>Bladerunner</i>
WEEK 12 Nov. 10	<b>Bee Season Projects DUE</b>	Present Bee Season models and plans, & collage artist inspiration
WEEK 13 Nov. 17	<b>COHESION:</b>	Sketchbook Assignment #8 Assignment: Collaboration Project (Final)
WEEK 14 Nov. 24	<b>PRESENTATION STRATEGY:</b> Verbal and visual articulation of design concepts. Choosing and preparing multi-media materials for a convincing and achievable design presentation.	Discussion Work in Class in groups for Prelim design of Collaboration Project Sketchbook Assignment #9
WEEK 15 Dec. 1	Work in Class in groups	Sketchbook Assignment #10 Critique of prelim design packet. Groups meet individually with teacher

**FINAL EXAM:**

**Wednesday, December 10, 8-10am**

### 132a Assignments for Sketchbook/Image Library

- 1     A)     Sketch a picture of a sign with only text visible (ex. STOP)  
       B)     On the opposing page of your sketchbook, paste an image you have found that visually communicates the meaning of the word
- 2     Create a collage that visually communicates the word that the instructor gives you.
- 3     Take 3 images, each one should clearly show different depth of field.
- 4     Visit the Fisher Museum on campus. Create a portrait inspired by the work you see at the museum
- 5     Use your camera's adjustments for contrast and saturation (separately) to alter a photo that you took. Paste the original next to the 2 other adjusted images. Try to create a different visual mood than the original in the adjusted images.
- 6     Find an image that tells a clear story through visual clues.
- 7     Find, photograph, or draw two images that convey movement in different ways.
- 8     To show the impact of light and shadow, take 2 photos of the same architectural detail (place on opposing pages in sketchbook)  
       A)     during the day, in bright sunlight  
       B)     during morning or evening, dusk or dawn
- 9     Find a simple small object. Draw 3 elevations of the object each in a different scale. Use 3 separate pages in your sketchbook.
- 10    Find an image that visually conveys a sound.