

USC School of Dramatic Arts

SEMINAR in THEATER DESIGN THTR 431

Spring 2019 Fridays 9:00 - 11:50AM

Location: MCC 108

TBA: Various locations around Los Angeles
as scheduling & availability permits

Instructor: Terry Ann Gordon

Office: MCC Adjunct Offices, 2nd Floor

Office Hours: By Pre-arranged Appointment,
available at all times via email!

Contact Info: tgordon@usc.edu

Cell: (818) 636-2729

Course Description and Overview

The THTR 431 Senior Seminar in Theatrical Design is designed to offer upper classmen an opportunity to meet working professionals in their individual and specific fields of study. The class will visit off site venues which encompass Theatre, Television, Film and Entertainment opportunities. The 431 student will be exposed to different aspects of “the business”, both in and out of their respective disciplines, showcasing career paths not previously considered or recognized.

Throughout the semester, students will visit sites and venues off campus, and participate in a variety of panels with guest lecturers. The 431 students will also be gathering their own research to present for class discussion.

All students will be required to participate in a final presentation reviewing the semester’s activities and critiquing the value as it pertains to their individual discipline.

Learning Objectives

The THTR 431 Senior Seminar class will strive to bolster and reinforce concepts and skill sets acquired by the student during their prior years of study in the USC SDA.

Through a series of site visits, research projects and in-class presentations, the student will assemble a working knowledge of professional expectations, abilities and skills required to forward their own chosen careers in the entertainment sector.

Prerequisite(s): Senior SDA Production Student (or approved enrollment)
Co-Requisite (s): None
Concurrent Enrollment: None
Recommended Preparation: A functional understanding of generally accepted theatrical terminology and slang.

Required Materials

Required Text: Notebook: Each student will create their own “text” throughout the semester. These “texts” should contain all classroom notes, handouts, student research, panel studies as well as notes on all visitations.

The work must be well documented, organized and presented at the end of the semester during the class final exam period. This notebook/text will be 45% of the final grade. Collection of business cards and resumes.

Required Research:

- Various assigned research assignments throughout the semester
- Preparatory research on various guest lecturers and sites to be visited

Required Supplies

- Notebook—Student’s preference: see above “required text” information
- Camera--phone camera acceptable: photos of visitations, sites and panels

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Communication

We will be visiting many locations and meeting many new people during this class. It is incredibly important to come to class having prepared specifically for the activity of the day. This preparation may include reading, research, writing, and/or creating site/guest artist specific questions. Students will be required to be an alert and inquisitive audience participating in the discussions and activities taking place each week. We will be interacting with very busy industrial professionals who have graciously agreed to participate. Their time is valuable and your participation will determine your level of success in this career investment.

Grade breakdown is as follows:

Attendance, prep and participation	30%
Notebook/text presentation	45%
Final “Showcase/Portfolio” Participation	25%

Resource Presentations: Notebook: (45% of grade)

Students will collect and organize resource materials gathered from semester's site visits, in-class projects and other source locations, to be presented at the end of the semester during the final.

Each student will be responsible to write a review/critique of each classes event. The minimum should be a one page double spaced essay. The maximum writing is up to the students enthusiasm for the guest or site.

Each Essay should include:

- description of the site/guest's job criteria, duties.
- job aspect not realized by the student..unknown aspects
- possibility of career option for the individual student

These surveys/reviews for each event/panel/site will be incorporated into the notebook to be submitted as the final on the scheduled final day.

Preparation and Participation (30% of grade)

Failure to attend class regularly will impact the final grade. Attendance is required.

Note that if you are not in attendance, you cannot participate. Arriving more than 15 minutes late will be considered tardy, frequent tardiness will constitute an unexcused absence. It is up to the student to find out what they missed when absent from class. Work must be completed regardless of absences. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence, after that your grade will be reduced by one letter grade for subsequent unexcused absences. Please contact the professor by phone or email ahead of class to explain any upcoming absence and to receive assignment information. Missing class due to a SDA production, without prior approval from the instructor, will not be considered an "excused" absence. Excused absences are – sickness, family situations (i.e. death or emergency) and University recognized religious holidays.

As a majority of the class meeting will be off-site, it is the responsibility of the student to manage transportation to and from every off campus site. Occasionally non-class time visits may occur. **The class will be subject to the availability of our "guests" and last minute adjustments may be necessary.** Students will be notified of these changes as quickly as possible and all care will be taken to facilitate both the professional and students needs. Adjustments will be made to class schedules in the event multiple visits are required in one week. Above attendance parameter's hold true for ALL off-site classes.

Students will be emailed weekly regarding that weeks agenda. All students must confirm receipt of all email updates.

Semester Schedule

Week 1 **Discuss class Syllabus and expectations for Semester**

Assignment: Prepare for next class session. Work on your personal resume and bring at least 3 sample variations to class as well as sample professional resumes. Also bring 3 possible business card designs for yourself as well as samples of professional cards you like.

We will look at current resumes, portfolio ‘expectations’ and websites and view various personal career websites.

Week 2-9 **Class Tours and Lectures: Tentative and open to change**

As it is nearly impossible to pre-schedule off-site activities for weeks in advance; visits, tours and guest lectures will be announced on a monthly and occasionally weekly basis. Both off-site trips and lectures/guests will be chosen from a list of possibilities based on students needs and availability:

Tentative Field Trips TBA

- LA Opera
- CTG backstage
- National touring productions (PSM)
- Tour Film studios: Paramount, Universal, Sony, Fox, WB
- Local theatre organizations
- Local scene shops (Cal Theming, Scenic Route, ABC, Trio)
- Local rental shops (props, event and theatre lighting, film lighting, Costumes etc...)
- Getty Villa-Theatre venue & Getty Center
- Disneyland (backstage)
- Studio Audience ‘taping’: Show TBA
- Professional Theatrical production TBA
- Backstage Disneyland
- Imagineering.
- Blizzard: Video Game design
- Bezarck: theme park design
- Magic Castle: Design for Magic
- Cruiseline Design: Costumes, Scenic, lighting
- Working TV sitcom tour: al areas
- Union Reps
- Professional panelists: introduction to/ portfolio review by working pros and interview tips and techniques
- Work opportunities for new graduates: Venues and contacts

Lecturers.... and Tentative panels TBA

- Local USA 892, 705, 829/IATSE Representatives
- Local Art Directors from various disciplines (Theatre, TV, Film, TV Award shows)
- Stage managers/ADs, Producers, Various Production depts: Costume Designers, Production Designers, Art Directors, Illustrators, Concept Artists, Various Artisans/Crafts From a variety of disciplines

March 11-18

Spring Break

Week 11-16

Class Tours, Lectures, Portfolio Prep Continuing TBA

(See above list of activities)

Final Examination Date: Friday, May 4, 2018

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) 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://](http://scampus.usc.edu)

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

Syllabus Acknowledgement

This is a “contract” between the course instructor and the student. The University views the THTR 431 class syllabus as a contract; it is extremely important that you read and understand the contents of the document. To that end, please carefully read the THTR 431 syllabus and sign below, acknowledging receipt of the material and your understanding of the course expectations. If you have any questions or need further clarification on any section, please feel free to contact the instructor by the means listed at the beginning of the syllabus.

I have received THTR 431 Syllabus and understand the class expectations.

Student Name (Print)

Date

Signature