

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

## **SEMINAR in THEATER DESIGN THTR 431**

**Spring 2020 Fridays 9:00 - 11:50AM**

**Location: MCC 108**

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

**Instructor:** Terry Ann Gordon

**Office: Costume Shop Office**

**Office Hours: Thursdays 10-11**

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

Cell: (818) 636-2729

### **Course Description and Overview**

The THTR 431 Senior Seminar in Theatrical Design is designed to offer graduating design students 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 research career and job opportunities 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 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 industries.

**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/Entertainment terminology.

## **Required Materials**

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

Presentations and visitations must be well documented, organized and presented at the end of the semester during the class final exam period. This notebook/text will be 75% of the final grade.

Collection of business cards and resumes should be included in the notebook as well.

There will be occasional minimal admission fees for some venues. This cost will be the responsibility of the student and in lieu of textbook purchases.

### **Required Research:**

- Various assigned research assignments throughout the semester with focus on the individual panel professionals and venues: their job opportunities and website career information.
- Preparatory research on various guest lecturers and sites to be visited. Notes should include: who, what, where, when, why.

### **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**

Preparation for visiting entertainment venues and hosting working professionals. includes researching the individual or venue, creating site/guest artist specific questions. Students are expected to be alert, attentive, polite and participatory in all discussions and activities.

Students are expected to be engaged and interactive. Participation will determine your level of success in this career investment opportunity.

Grade breakdown is as follows:

75%: Attendance prep and participation: each class is worth 5%

25%: Final presentation of notebook reviews and assignments.

### **Resource Presentations: Notebook: (25% 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 is responsible to write a review/critique of each class 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 evaluations/reviews for each event/panel/site will comprise the notebook to be submitted as the final on the scheduled final day.

### **Preparation and Participation (75% of grade)**

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

Note that if you are not in attendance, you may miss an important career opportunity. Our panelists and site hosts are taking time out of busy schedules and your absence will be considered rude and unprofessional. 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. 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, is unacceptable and 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. All attempts to keep visits scheduled during class time will be made. Occasionally non-class time visits/travel time 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. 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.

#### Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

## **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 all off-site activities 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 variety of possibilities. Based on students needs and venue/panelists availability this course and students must be flexible.

#### **Tentative Field Trips TBA**

- LA Opera
- CTG backstage

- National touring productions (PSM)
- Local major film studios, i.e. Paramount, Universal, Sony
- Local sizable theatre organizations
- LACMA
- Local scenic shops (Cal Theming, Scenic Route, ABC, etc...)
- Local rental shops (props, event and theatre lighting, film lighting, etc...)
- Getty Villa-Theatre venue
- Getty Center
- Disneyland (backstage)
- Studio Audience ‘taping’: Show TBA
- Professional Theatrical production TBA
- Varied Entertainment Production facilities: Escape Room, Theme park production

**Guest Panelists: TBA**

- Local USA 892, 705, 829/IATSE Representatives
- Local Professional from varied disciplines per students focus: Theatre, TV, Film, TV Award shows, Entertainment
- Stage managers/ADs, Producers, Costume Designers, Production Designers, Art Directors, Illustrators, Concept Artists, Various Artisans/Crafts From a variety of disciplines

March 15-22

**Spring Break**

Week 11-16

**Class Tours, Lectures, Portfolio Prep Continuing TBA**  
(See above list of activities)

**Final Examination Date: Friday, May 8 8:00-10:00 AM**

**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"](mailto:ability@usc.edu) [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, ([HYPERLINK "http://www.usc.edu/scampus"](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) [www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or [HYPERLINK "http://scampus.usc.edu"](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

## 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.

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Student Name (Print)

Date

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Signature