

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 131A Introduction to Advanced Theatrical Production for BFA Students

Units: 2.0

Term: Fall 2020

Day: Thursday

Lecture Time: 8:00AM-9:20AM

Lecture location: PED 114F/ZOOM

Lab time: TBD

Lab Locations: TBD

Crew assignments – dates and times: TBD

Instructors:

Scott Faris: Head of Stage Management

Office: MCC 101D

Office Hours: M 2-3:30p, W&TH 10-12p, F 3-4:30p

Contact: scottfar@usc.edu (917) 825-2739

**Christina Haatainen-Jones: Associate Professor of Theatre
Practice in Costume Design**

Office: PED114f

Office Hours: Tues./Thurs. 12:00-2:00 and by appointment

Contact: haataine@usc.edu (818) 468-6756

Philip G. Allen, Associate Professor of Sound Design

Office: BIT M4

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact: philippga@usc.edu 303-618-4688

Course Description

Introduction to the non-performance areas of theatrical production (administrative, design, and technical fields) through virtual or hands-on participation in USC School of Dramatic Arts productions. Through lectures and related projects, the course will also provide an overview of the design process in the areas of Scenic, Lighting, Costume and Sound Design, as well as in the role of the Stage Manager in a production. Material will be geared for the BFA & BA with emphasis in Production students.

Learning Objectives

Learn the basics of stage crew and shop operations through lectures, readings, research, hands-on projects, and practical experience (if possible during the Covid-19 environment). Apply the creative process of areas of theatrical design and production through labs and in-class projects.

Each THTR 131 student will participate in a variety of production practicum sessions during the two semesters of the class.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: Acquire the reading materials and familiarize yourself with them.

Course Notes:

Lecture review sheets will be made available on Blackboard for certain lectures. Supplementary reading materials may be posted on Blackboard for particular lectures. Most quizzes and exams will be available only on blackboard, bring an appropriate device to lecture or the exam period to access them.

Communication

Students will use their USC email addresses for all communications. It may be possible for SLACK to be used as a channel for this project. There will be weekly production meetings in addition to the meeting times of the class.

USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

Classroom norms

- Please present yourself professionally, i.e. dressed properly, sitting up.
- Please log into the class on your laptop rather than your phone. If this is an issue for you, please let the instructor know in the chat.
- Please mute your microphone while in the synchronous class when not speaking.
- Please keep your camera on when in class.
- Use the raised hand icon (under Participants) to be called on to speak.
- While in breakout groups, unmute your microphone

Zoom “Netiquette” – Best Practices during class and breakout rooms

- Listen actively and attentively.
- Be respectful of one another and what is being said, without interrupting, even when you disagree.
- Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker's comments.

Synchronous session recording notice

Synchronous class sessions will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Residential and Hybrid Streaming Model Courses

Continuously updated requirements for the latest COVID-19 testing and health protocol requirements for USC can be found on the [USC COVID-19 resource center website](#).

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- (Gillette) Seventh Edition - Theatrical Design and Production, An Introduction to Scenic Design and Construction, Lighting, Sound, Costume, and Makeup by J. Michael Gillette
- Stage Management Basics, 1st Edition, by Emily Roth, Jonathan Allender-Zivic & Katy McGlaughlin, Routledge/Focal Press

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Class Meetings: All students will attend Thursday morning lectures headed by Production and Design Faculty. Students **must** attend every weekly lecture. The two semesters will be divided into segments covering all areas of theatrical production. There will be lectures about every production element employed in the theater. **Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class to assess understanding of the material covered in the reading and previous lecture.** Makeup Quizzes will not be allowed.

THTR 131A Labs will be virtual assignments during the section on Costume Design, in addition there may be on ground lab meetings for the sound design section if health conditions permit.

Crew Practicum Assignment: You will be assigned by instructors during the semester to a 397/497 Experience.

Grading Criteria:

Grading is based on satisfactory completion of both the academic and practical requirements of the course. The grades in each area will be added together for the final letter grade, which is awarded based on the following percentages (A>94%>A->90%>B+>87%>B>84%>B->80%>C+>77%>C>74%>C->70%>D+>67%>D>64%>D->60%>F)

Academic requirements – 100%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Quizzes (5)	4 pts. ea.	20
Labs (3)	5 pts. ea.	15
Sound Journal (1)	15 pts.	15
Designer presentations (1)	5 pts	5
Practicum	20 pts.	20
Final Exam	25 pts.	25
Totals		100

Grades for quizzes and exams are based on the percentage of questions answered correctly. The quizzes will be graded by each segment's professor. If you have specific questions about your grade, please consult first with the professor who gave you the exam.

Academic assessment:

- Quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class.
- There will be no “make-up” quizzes or exams
- Required reading is due **on** the listed date: always bring your books to class for reference during discussions. Any quiz will be on the reading for that week or on the content covered in the previous week’s lecture.
- Turn off all cell phones during class sessions unless you are actively using it to take a quiz or exam.
- If you have more than one device (phone or computer) on during examinations, or if you have any additional website open other than the Blackboard exam, you will be asked to leave the room and you will fail that exam.

Final Exam:

The Final Exam will be administered on Tues 11/17/2020 at 8:00-10:00AM which is the Mandatory Final Exam Meeting Time.

Please note that per University policy, the instructors are unable to schedule an alternative time for you to take the exam. If you have questions you can contact the USC Testing office at 213-740-7166. Please note it is your responsibility to contact the

testing office if you have multiple exams on one day in advance to ensure you can take your final exam.

Lab Session Scheduling: If possible, lab work will be from 2:00pm-4:50pm Friday. Don't schedule yourself for any other events during this time. **Read the syllabus and check Blackboard to see where each lab is scheduled. Any last-minute changes will be announced on Blackboard.** Make sure you write your name legibly on the sign-in sheet.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week 1 Scott Faris, Head of Stage Management – Lecture 1

8/20/2020 Topics for Week 1: Introduction to 131A & SDA

- Welcome to 131A
- The world of SDA
 - Theatres
 - Staff
- DPS for emergencies
- Your journey as Stage Managers, TD's & Designers: — what's ahead
- What does a stage manager do?

Reading for next week:

Stage Management Basics by Roth, Allender-Zivic & McGlaughlin

- Chapter 1, pp. 3 – 6 The Psychology of Stage Managing
- Chapter 2, pp. 7 – 17 Preliminary Steps
- Chapter 3, pp. 19 – 29 The Theatre
- Chapter 4, pp. 31 - 33 Safety

Attendance at the Company Meeting on Zoom on Monday, 8/17/20 at 5:00PM is mandatory barring class conflicts.

Week 2 Scott Faris, Head of Stage Management – Lecture 2

8/27/20 Quiz on Topics from Week 1

Lecture topics for Week 2:

- Questions re; psychology of SM'ing:
- Preliminary steps
- The Theater

- Types of theaters
- Hierarchy in theatre
- Safety in theatre

Reading for next week:

Stage Management Basics by Roth, Allender-Zivic & McGlaughlin

- Chapter 5, pp. 35 – 37 Auditions
- Chapter 6, pp. 38 – 52 Preproduction
- Chapter 8, pp. 59 -- 74 Rehearsals

Week 3 Scott Faris, Head of Stage Management – Lecture 3

9/3/20 Quiz on Topics from Week 2

Review reading:

Lecture topics for Week 3:

- Pre-production
- Casting protocols at SDA
- Reading the script — production analysis
- First rehearsals: what do I need?
- Rehearsals continue

Reading for next week: Stage Management Basics by Roth, Allender-Zivic & McGlaughlin (Routledge/Focal Press)

- Chapter 10, pp. 79 – 87 Prior to Tech
- Chapter 11, pp. 89 – 91 Tech Rehearsals
- Chapter 12, pp. 93 – 95 Dress Rehearsals

Week 4 Scott Faris, Head of Stage Management – Lecture 4

9/10/20 Quiz on Week 3 Topics

Topics for Week 4:

- Preparation for tech rehearsal
- Tech rehearsal period
- Dress rehearsals

Reading for next week with Professor Haatainen-Jones:

Gillette - Theatrical Design and Production
Chapter 18, pp. 450-472 Costume Design

Week 5 Tina Haatainen-Jones: Assoc. Professor of Costume Design - Lecture 1

9/17/20 Quiz on Reading: Gillette - Costume Design Ch. 18

TOPIC: Costume Design - The Creative Process

- How to read a script as a costume designer.
- Methods of research and ways to organize your ideas.
- Communicating your inspirations and designs clearly through sketches and other means.

Assignment: Research a professional Costume Designer assigned to you. Prepare a 5-7-minute presentation about the designer - include photos/drawings of their work and background as to how they achieved their success as a designer. Presentations will occur over the last two costume classes - week 7 & 8.

LAB: Costume Research Lab

Find images of people in paintings or sculpture who best illicit the types of characters described by your individual lists.

Remember to pull your research from paintings or sculptures from the time period.

NOTE: Images from Costume history/research books will not be accepted.

- Use art research from the actual period to define your choices for costume design.
- Organize and present effective research files.
- Email assignment to haataine@usc.edu by 9/24/20

Reading for next week:

Gillette - Ch. 19 - Costume Construction Pg. 473-501

Week 6 Tina Haatainen-Jones: Assoc. Professor of Costume Design - Lecture 2

9/24/20 Quiz on Reading: Gillette - Costume Construction Ch. 19

TOPIC: Costume Design - Technical Process/Terminology/Communication

- Shop hierarchy - Job descriptions
- Breakdowns and Bibles. How they're used; what to include and how to organize for shops, directors, stage management, running crews, actors, and for your own use.
- How to write construction and alteration notes
- Timelines and Budgets - both monetary and time
- Fabrics

LAB: . Make-Up Lab

Create 2 makeup designs using your B&W head shots sent by email to you.

#2 pencil and white pencil works well to show shadow and highlight.

Use the Gillette text Chapter 20 to guide your designs.

Include a list of the makeup and processes used to create your look.

Research where to purchase the makeup and include the price for chosen supplies.

1. Old age makeup
2. Sci-fi creature/alien incorporating prosthetics

RECAP:

- Create old age makeup on photo
- Create Alien makeup on photo
- Include list of chosen makeup found online to complete each look
- List prices of makeup product and any prosthetic supplies needed
- Email assignment to haataine@usc.edu by 10/1/20

Reading for next week:

Gillette - Ch. 20 - Makeup Pg. 502-522

Week 7 **Tina Haatainen-Jones: Assoc. Professor of Costume Design Lecture 3**
10/1/20 PRESENTATIONS: Costume Designers - Group 1

TOPIC: Costume Design - Putting it all together

- Production Etiquette – in: fittings; rehearsals; with crew; with collaborators.
- Fitting photography – How to best show your choices.
- How to talk to actors about their characters and your choices.
- Fast change preparation and choreography. Making adjustments in tech/dress.
- What to bring up in Production Meetings – ex: What types of mics are being used on actors; Hats and Lighting; Colors of set and lights and how they affect the costumes.
- Working with wardrobe crew.
- Photographing the production.

LAB: Animation Costume Design Lab

Choose an animated character that you will turn yourself into for a performance. Supply image of chosen character.

Research all elements of your costume - including undergarments, socks, stockings, shoes, wigs, jewelry, prosthetics, etc. - and create a bible with photos describing each element. Investigate all elements of character and find the best way to actualize each element.

Include cost and fiber content as well as what alterations will be needed if necessary. If you need to add details source the trim, metal, leather, or whatever you need to finalize your look to perfection.

Finally, through drawing, collage, photoshop (or combination) create a rendering of yourself in the costume utilizing your chosen items.

RECAP:

- Re-imagine an animated character and interpret it into a wearable costume.
- Create informative pages for your costume bible.

- Depict your intent with clear communication - be it drawing or otherwise.
- Source costume pieces online.
- E-mail assignment by 10/8/20

Reading for next week:

NONE!

Week 8 **Tina Haatainen-Jones: Assoc. Professor of Costume Design - Lecture 4**
10/8/20 **PRESENTATIONS: Costume Designers - Group 2**

TOPIC: Review and In-Class Project

Week 9 **Philip G. Allen, Assoc. Professor of Sound Design Lecture 1**
10/15/20 **Topics: Nuts and Bolts of Sound – On Zoom**

- What is Sound Design?
- Sound Reinforcement – plays vs. Musicals
- Design considerations – how to match sound design with the visual areas?
- Nature of sound – frequency, intensity, decibels (show the math), hertz
- Basic Acoustics – timbre, phase

Reading for today: (Gillette) Theatrical Design and Production
Chapter 21, pp. 523-539 Sound Design and Technology

Week 10 **Philip G. Allen, Assoc. Professor of Sound Design Lecture 2**
10/22/20 **Topics: More Nuts and Bolts of Sound - On Zoom**

- Basic sound system components and definition of each item: Microphone, Mixer, signal processing, amplifier, loudspeaker
- Recording and Playback Equipment – Live Recording, Prerecorded sources, Mixdown
- Broad intro to Pro Tools and Digital Audio Workstations
- Playback Software; Q-Lab
- Midi, Digital vs. Analogue sources and storage media
- Microphone types
- Speaker types

Reading for today: (Gillette) Theatrical Design and Production
Chapter 21, pp. 539-545 Sound Design and Technology

Week 11 **Philip G. Allen, Assoc. Professor of Sound Design Lecture 3**
10/29/20 **Topics for Week 3: Sound Design Arc - On Zoom**

- Commitment, Analysis, Research, Incubation, Selection, Implementation, Evaluation
- Design Timeline for sound
- Research techniques for Sound Designers

- Best practices for sharing cues with Directors and Designers
- Roles in Sound Design: Designer, Production Sound Engineer, A2, Assistant Designer
- The SDA Design Criteria & Timeline

Reading for today: (Gillette) Theatrical Design and Production

Chapter 21, pp. 546-551 Sound Design and Technology

Reading: (Gillette) Theatrical Design and Production

Ch. 2, The Design Process, pp. 22-36

Week 12 Philip G. Allen, Assoc. Professor of Sound Design Lecture 4
11/5/20 Topics for Week 4: Design Considerations; Musicals - On Zoom

- Sound Design for Musicals Pt. 1

Week 13 Philip G. Allen, Assoc. Professor of Sound Design Lecture 5
11/12/20 Topics: Design Considerations; Musicals 2 - On Zoom

- Sound Design for Musicals Pt. 2

Cumulative Journal on the Sound Design Unit weeks 1-5 Due by Friday

Final Examination Date: FALL SEMESTER FINAL is Tuesday 11/17/20 at 8:00-10:00AM

Final will cover material in the reading, material covered in lectures and labs, and practical knowledge gained in the course of your crew assignment.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

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 for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000 – 24/7 on call for non-emergency information,

dps.usc.edu