

USC School of Dramatic Arts



Achim Freyer
Installation Ace Gallery

THTR 132a The Art of Theatrical Design

Fall 2020

Monday 10-11:50am

Location: Hybrid model/MCC 107

Instructor: Sibyl Wickersheimer

Office: JEF 200

Office Hours: weekly Mon12-1 & by appt

You must make an appointment!

Contact Info: <mailto:sawicker@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

This class is to promote the development of the artistic process and communication strategies of the individual within the environment of collaborative storytelling. By the end of class students will be able to communicate using common design vocabulary, visual tools and research methods in support of collaboration. Students will also learn how individual artists construct an artistic process in order to begin implementation of a life-long individual process for themselves. Students will practice using the above-mentioned methods and tools in group assignments; generating narrative design ideas and developing a foundation for future theatrical work.

Course Notes

Class will begin as an online course using zoom for class sessions. Class will move to hybrid model using MCC 107 as the classroom, pending necessary state approvals. Please make every attempt to be sitting upright at a desk or table with your video on during class. Let instructor know if you are experiencing challenges with this request.

Communication & Class Meeting information

Course announcements will be provided through Blackboard and blackboard emails. Course materials will be provided in a variety of ways as noted below. As much as possible, the materials will be posted in links in Blackboard content folders. Synchronous class sessions will be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard. Please do not share these recordings with anyone outside of the classroom 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).

Assignments will be turned in via a class Google Team Drive folder via text based, image based, or video based submissions discussed in class per assignment.

Turn off cell phones during all class sessions and put them on desk at front of classroom.

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

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Please note that you will need an operational computer to run zoom sessions for class sessions and work sessions. You will also be required to use Blackboard, Google Drive, Google docs and slides, and Photoshop from the Adobe Creative Cloud suite of software. Adobe license information will be provided. The following technology resources are available. Students should set up a Design lab account when allowed to be back on campus.

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](#)

Required and Supplementary Materials

Texts:

Purchase these 3 physical or ebooks. Course materials are also available on ARES through USC library.

The Creative Habit, Twyla Tharp

A Director Prepares, Anne Bogart

The Art of Theatrical Design, Kaiome Malloy

Additional references are selected from the following texts during the course and will be accessed online:

Bee Season, Myla Goldberg

365 plays & 100 Plays for the First 100 Days, Suzan-Lori Parks

The Collaborative Habit, Twyla Tharp

Model Making: Materials & Methods by David Neat
Designer Drafting and Visualization, 2nd Edition by Patricia Woodbridge (required in other BFA classes)
Unbalancing Acts, Richard Foreman
The Empty Space, Peter Brook
The Dramatic Imagination, Robert Edmond Jones

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*
Susan Froemke, *Wagner's Dream*
PBS's series: Art 21 ([William Kentridge: Anything is Possible](#), [Abigail DeVille, etc](#))
[TateShots: Olafur Eliasson](#) 'Collective Experience'

Supplies

sketchbook - white paper – **no lines** – at least 8"x10" but can be larger
Digital camera with manual settings OR Digital Camera app (Firstlight or other, we will discuss)
Architectural scale rule
25' or longer tape measure
metal, straight-edge ruler
Exacto knife and blades to fit size#11
Cutting matt – 18"x24" is best but 12"x18" is easier to transport
Glue stick, white glue & hot glue
Tape(various)

Grading breakdown

Assignments will be readings, quizzes, project based work, and written response papers. 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; students will be asked to post responses to readings using discussion forums on Blackboard prior to class discussions. Written assignments and visual presentations are to be turned in physically, or uploaded as files to specific Google Drive & Blackboard folders, as specified by instructor. When turning in files, always create a compressed pdf file under 5MB in size. Please use the following naming format:

LASTNAME_132a_PROJECTNAME_DATE

for example **WICKERSHEIMER_132a_METRO_08292019.pdf**

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignment grades will be lowered by at least one letter grade if they are not turned in by the assigned deadline. Turn in assignments by 12pm/midnight prior to the class date deadline. Attendance will affect the student's final participation grade because you cannot participate if you are not in class. If the student has more than 2 unexcused absences, overall grade may also be lowered by 10%.

Late work (assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises) shall be accepted, and a grade penalty will apply unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur. Please always discuss late work with me. Communicating your challenges will always benefit you and gives me an opportunity to better support your educational experience rather than just assign a grade penalty.

Grading Timeline

Grading takes time. Please be patient, a two week turn around is likely. While you may always inquire about your grade, please do not expect an immediate response after turning in assignments.

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.**

Grading Rubric

See attached guide used to determine the quality of work submitted for grading. Assignments may also have specific rubric details included in the instructor's written description of the assignment.

Grading Criteria

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

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

Assignments	Points	% of Grade
Sketchbook Assignments	120	25
Storyboard Assignment	50	15
Photoshop Assignment	50	10
Responses to readings - posted in Discussion forums in Blackboard (3x)	90	10
Artist Presentation	50	10
Final Group Project	100	15
Participation - Responses in class and in weekly discussion forums	30	15
TOTAL	490	100

WEEKLY SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE!

WEEK 1 Aug. 17	SEEING: Active and passive discovery. Inspiration. Promoting discovery and invention. What is 'the artistic process'? What is in your tool kit?	Start reading Tharp, Creative Habit p. 1-45, Mallory Ch 1 thru 3 Sketchbook assignment #1: recording details
WEEK 2 Aug. 24	WORK & PROCESS Organizing thoughts and ideas into concepts, themes, and relevant communication. Decision, selection, and the rigor of creative design. Exposing the artistic process. What's in your box and how is it organized?	Read: Tharp p. 45-91, Mallory Ch. 6 thru 11 Sketchbook assignment #2: text to visual signage
WEEK 3 Aug. 31	VISUAL STORYTELLING Harvesting details as visual dramaturgy. Elements of Design. Principles of Composition. Digital Photography lecture/discussion and Photoshop demo.	Read: Finish Tharp book, Mallory Ch. 12 thru 16 and Ch. 22 Sketchbook assignment #3: sketch one object each day using different lines
WEEK 4 Sept. 7	NO CLASS : LABOR DAY	
WEEK 5 Sept. 14	VISUALIZING NARRATIVE Intro to Storyboarding and cinematic use of transitions.	In class: perspective sketching exercises from Ch. 22 Read: Storyboarding excerpts in Blackboard content folder Sketchbook assignment #4: capture or create one image that tells a story
Sept. 10	<u>Visions & Voices – RSVP – Funmilola Fagbamila performance</u>	
WEEK 6 Sept. 21	VISUAL LITERACY = Lifelong research. Online FIELD TRIP(s) : The USC Libraries Facing Survival: David Kassan (online gallery)	Read: SLP, 365 Play and article (Blackboard) Sketchbook assignment #5: capture/create 3 different images that show movement Meet with partner to create a rough storyboard for a 365 Play.
Sept. 22	<u>Visions & Voices – RSVP – Kristina Wong</u>	

WEEK 7 Sept. 28	<p><i>Watch Exerpts from Objectified and Helvetica and Art 21 (if time allows...)</i></p> <p>Photoshop Sketching and Collage demonstration</p>	Assign: Research and Revision of Storyboards for 365 Play, Watch me work – SLP at Public Theatre, Sketchbook #6: Use as journal for collecting research.
WEEK 8 Oct. 5	<p>COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</p> <p>Scenarios for maximizing the strengths of the group. Brainstorming, listening, and processing. Good habits and best practices.</p> <p>In Class: Production Meeting Exercise</p> <p>Orthographic Drawings & Scale.</p>	<p>Present Storyboards via Google Slides Presentation</p> <p>Read: Bogart Introduction, Ch 1 & 2</p> <p>Sketchbook #7: take photos of all elevations of a building near you, record/sketch orthographic information</p>
Oct 11 5pm PST	<p>VISIONS & VOICES EVENT:</p> <p>The Intersectin: Woke Black Folk – a Performance by Funmilola Fagbamila</p> <p>Sunday, October 11</p>	Online performance on Sunday, Oct 11 at 5pm PST
WEEK 9 Oct. 12	<p>DECONSTRUCTION AND ASSEMBLY</p> <p>Exercises in communicating theatrical ideas with various media and layered images.</p> <p>In class: Photoshop demo, basic layers, cutting/pasting</p>	<p>Pair with another student and swap building images/information.</p> <p>Sketchbook #8: sketch orthographic drawings using a proportional scale figure to help represent the size of the building.</p> <p>Photoshop Assignment: Create building site information sheet as directed in class.</p>
WEEK 10 Oct. 19	<p>METAPHOR/STYLIZATION AND VISUAL VOCABULARY</p> <p>Parallel values & understandings. Historical and contemporary iconography and its relevance to theatrical design.</p>	<p>Read: Mallory Ch. 4 & 5, 17 thru 21</p> <p>Discuss practice of sharing information via building project.</p> <p>Discuss the artist research project and final group project.</p> <p>Assign: Select Artist for presentation</p> <p>Sketchbook #9 create a portrait in the style of the artist you selected.</p>
Oct. 22 5:30pm PST	<p>Visions & Voices Event – Kristina Wong for Public Office</p>	Online performance on Thursday, Oct 22 at 5:30pm PST.

WEEK 11 Oct. 26	CRITICISM & CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE Groups and class critique events. PRESENTATION STRATEGY: Verbal and visual articulation of design concepts. Choosing and preparing multi-media materials for a convincing and achievable design presentation.	Read selected text for Final group project. Discuss online performances and review others. Continue Scale exercises. Brief meet with groups. Sketchbook Assignment # 10: pick an object and create a thumbnail sketch of it in 3 orthographic views (1 to 1 scale)
WEEK 12 Nov. 2	Artist Presentations Breakout rooms/Group work	Artist Presentations Read: Mallory Ch 24 thru 28 Sketchbook Assignment #11: thumbnail sketches of object in 3 perspective views, use light source to help focus on shapes/shadows (refer to Mallory Ch. 22)
WEEK 13 Nov. 9	Breakout rooms/Group work Site Model Discussion – Continue Scale work	Break out rooms - Groups present ideas to Sibyl Sketchbook Assignment #12: use ruler and scale rule to draft 3 orthographic views of object in smaller scale
Reading week/ Finals week	Work in Class in groups – Scale/Model/Visual layout Groups meet individually with Sibyl for a ‘study session’	
Nov. 23	Monday, Nov. 23, 8-10am FINAL EXAM	Group Projects Due Present models and plans, & artist inspiration Assignment: Discuss Final projects

Course Rubric

Rubric is for all assignments.

Corresponding Grade	A (Excellent)	B (Good)	C (Meets Expectations)	D (Approaches Expectations)	F (Needs Improvement)
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Criteria					
Creativity	Work is original, unique, and clever in execution of the assignment. Shows evidence of deep understanding of concepts introduced in class.	Work is generally unique and thoughtful in approach. Student exhibits understanding of concepts introduced in class and appropriate use of concepts.	Work is somewhat unique and shows a basic level of conceptual thinking. Appropriate use of concepts, but opportunities missed in engaging viewer.	Work is occasionally unique but shows a lack of conceptual thinking. Very few or no creative risks taken. Dull approach.	Work is not unique and lacks conceptual thought. Does not show original ideas.
Exploration of Tools and Skills presented in class	Work shows exceptional understanding of technical elements and clever application of the tools learned in class.	Work shows above average understanding of technical elements and appropriate application of the tools learned in class.	Work shows a basic understanding of technical element and some application of the tools learned in class.	Work shows little understanding of technical elements and application of the tools learned in class.	No understanding of technical elements or application of the tools learned in class.
Craftsmanship	Work is done with exceptional care and attention to detail.	Work is done with good care and attention to detail.	Work is done with only some care and attention to some details.	Work is done with little care and details are not considered.	Work is done carelessly.
Completion of project	Assignment is followed. All work is complete and on time.	Assignment is followed. Most work is complete and on time.	Assignment is generally followed. Some of the work is complete and on time.	Assignment is generally followed but most of the work is incomplete or late.	Assignment is not followed and inadequately completed.
Participation and effort	Work shows exceptional focus, effort and planning. Participated in all class discussions.	Work shows good focus, effort and planning. Participated in most class discussions.	Work shows some focus, effort and planning. Participated in some class discussions.	Work shows minimal focus, effort and planning. Barely participated in class discussions.	Work shows a lack of focus, effort and planning. No participation in class discussions.

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation should be provided. In addition, a mid-semester evaluation is recommended practice for early course correction. See CET support document [Mid-semester Evaluations](#).

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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

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, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.