

**THTR 131b Introduction to Advanced Theatrical
Production for BFA Students**

Units: 2.0

Spring 2021

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

Lecture Location: Zoom

Lab Time: Fridays 10:00AM-12:50 PM

Lab Locations: SDA Shops, Theatres and Zoom as noted

Crew Assignments-dates and times: TBD

Instructors:

Duncan Mahoney: Head of Technical Direction

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact: dmahoney@usc.edu 213-743-1968

Takeshi Kata, Professor of Scenic Design

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact: kata@usc.edu Text: 917-653-1616

Elizabeth Harper, Professor of Lighting Design

Office Hours: Fri. 10-2pm by appointment

Contact: heilich@usc.edu 310-729-0082

Course Description

Introduction to the non-performance areas of theatrical production (administrative, design, and technical fields) through lectures and participation in USC School of Dramatic Arts productions. The course will provide an overview of Scenic, Lighting, Costume and Sound Design, as well as Stage Management and Technical Direction. The two semesters will be divided into five week segments covering all areas of theatrical production. Material will be geared for the BFA & BA with emphasis in Production students.

Learning Objectives

After the semester, students should be able to identify and use the basic communication tools and the terminology used in each area, which will be covered in lectures, labs, reading and research assignments, as well as being able to function as a competent crew member with the foundational understanding of the stage crew and shop operations, experienced through the participation in the practicum, and hands-on Lab projects.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

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

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
- (BH) Backstage Handbook, Paul Carter, Broadway Press
- (DDV) Second Edition – Designer Drafting and Visualizing for the Entertainment World by Patricia Woodbridge and Hal Tiné

Class Meetings and Course Notes

Lectures: All students will attend Thursday morning lectures **having completed the reading and the weekly module for the week**. Quizzes will be given to assess understanding of the material covered in the reading and/or previous lecture. **Makeup quizzes will not be allowed.**

Labs: Labs will take place Online, in TTL, Costume Shop and SCA Theatres as **specified in the Syllabus**.

Crew Practicum Assignment: Upon completion of your Dossier, you will be assigned to a crew on one of the SDA Spring productions. You will report to the stage manager, who will make specific assignments, supervise you, evaluate your work, and make grading recommendations.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

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 – 40%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Quizzes and Research Paper	100 each	25
Final Exam	150	15
TOTAL	40	40

- There will be no “make-up” quizzes or exams.
- Required reading and Weekly modules are due **on** the listed date: always bring your books to class for reference during discussions. There will be a quiz 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

Final Exam:

The Final Exam will be administered on Wednesday 05/12/2021 at 8:00-10:00 am.

Please note that per University policy, the instructor 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

Grades for quizzes and exams are based on the percentages 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 the exam.

Running Crew Assignment Requirements – 35%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Crew member present and on time	10	10
Took initiative in tasks and asked questions when needed	10	10
Positive attitude toward SM/Designer/Director/Cast	10	10
Devoted 100% attention	5	5
TOTAL	35	35

- Points will be subtracted for lateness without a call to the SM
- Points will be subtracted for not attending
- If you are ill or injured and cannot attend a rehearsal or performance, inform your stage manager ASAP. A doctor’s note will be required for verification. Depending on the duration of the illness you may need to complete another crew assignment
- The use of any device to photograph or capture any portion of the rehearsal process is strictly prohibited with the exception of that which will facilitate production work as determined by the appropriate faculty.
- Phones should be turned off, or silenced when backstage.
- When you are engaged in a crew assignment, the crew assignment must be given top priority. This means that you should not be on any of your devices, unless that is required for the task.

If you are removed from a crew or the shop due to poor behavior, or if you do not complete your crew assignment and fail the course. The assessment of the performance is based on all scheduled rehearsals and performances. Absence from an entire rehearsal or performance will severely impact grading of the practicum portion of the class.

Crew Assignment Schedule: You will attend the meetings for your assigned show. You will get more specific information from the stage manager of your show.

Lab Requirements – 25%

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Lab Projects and Attendance	100 each	25
TOTAL		25

***Shop Lab Etiquette:** Intentionally unsafe work practices can result in serious injury to yourself and others. Such activities will not be tolerated and will be addressed by a penalty ranging from a reduction in the assigned grade to removal from the class. If you cause injury to another person through an intentional act, you may also be liable for criminal and civil penalties.

***Proper attire is required for shop lab sessions.** Safety glasses (ANSI Z87.1+) **must** be on at all times when power tools are in use, hearing protection should be used for noisy jobs, and dust masks are available for dusty jobs. **Sturdy closed toe and heel shoes and long pants/skirt must be worn.** Natural fiber clothing should be worn and long hair **must** be pinned or tied back. Lab assignments may involve paint, grease, and dust. **Do not wear clothes you want to keep clean and unstained.** You may wish to bring work clothes to change into.

Lab Session Scheduling: 10:00am-12:50pm Friday. Don't schedule yourself for any other events during this time. Some labs will be projects you work on your own, some will be in a group and others will be in specific shops. **Read the syllabus and check Blackboard to see where each lab is scheduled. Any last minute change will be announced on Blackboard.**

*Not Applicable in an online learning environment, though you should understand the importance of the safety requirements listed here.

Course Schedule

Lab 0 Jan 15 Duncan Mahoney Safety, Hand Tools, and Measuring/Marking

We will discuss the format of the class, appropriate safety wear in the labs and theaters, some safety considerations for hand tools, and I will demonstrate how to use some common measuring and marking tools including some little-known features

Class 1 Jan. 21 Elizabeth Harper Lighting Design Lecture 1 – The Creative Process and Terminology

How electricity and control of electricity forms the building blocks of design. We will discuss lighting concepts and the use of visual and verbal vocabularies to communicate ideas. We will learn to produce lighting renderings to more accurately observe the qualities of light.

Reading: Gillette Chapter 14: Lighting Design Pages 345-351 (through “Psychological Effects of Light”), Pages 362-369 (through “Layering”)

Lab 1 Jan. 22 Assignment Lighting Renderings

Choose a simple object from your house that doesn't have too many details but isn't too flat. (A mug, for example, would work well. A phone is too flat.) You will be drafting this item in THTR 132 with Tak so keep these renderings. You will also need a desk lamp or other small light source.

Without drawing the outline of the object, use highlight and shadow (in any medium) to render the object and the shadow it casts on the surface. Do not draw the source (desk lamp) You will render it in 3 states:

- Low sidelight
- Top light
- Back light

Scan these and turn them in, clearly labeled, in 1 file on Blackboard by 8am, Jan. 28.

Week 6 Assignment (Due Feb. 18): Research the professional lighting designer assigned to you. (See the Blackboard module for Feb. 18 for a published list and detailed assignment sheet). Prepare a 5-7 minute presentation about the designer.

Class 2 Jan. 28 Elizabeth Harper Lighting Design Lecture 2 – The Technical Process

How are light plots constructed? Merging conceptual with technical thinking, we will discuss the building blocks of a complete lighting design including the use of areas, systems, specials and an introduction to the principles of photometrics.

Reading: Gillette Chapter 16: Lighting Production Pages 403-419 (through “Electronic Dimmer Control”, Pages 426-428 (just the “Computer Board Control Capabilities” section) Pages 430-434 (just the “Circuiting” section)

Lab 2 Jan. 29 Elizabeth Harper Hanging, circuiting and focusing conventional fixtures

A hands-on technical lecture from the light lab. This will cover hanging, focusing, circuiting, troubleshooting and selection of lighting instruments.

Class 3 Feb. 4 Elizabeth Harper Lighting Design Lecture 3 – Communication and Documentation

What goes into a lighting package? How to read lighting drawings plus an overview of industry-standard symbols and markers. We will dissect and discuss plots, deck plots, elevations, detail drawings, and sections. We will review lighting paperwork and discuss how it communicates the details of a design to the electricians team.

Reading: Gillette Chapter 14: Lighting Design Pages 351-361 (“The light plot and related paperwork” through “Lighting Symbols”), Pages 373-378 (“Drawing the light plot and section” through “Selecting instrument size”)

Lab 3 Feb. 5 Elizabeth Harper LEDs, Data and control

A hands-on technical lecture from the light lab. This will cover LEDs and other fixtures that rely on data as well as the basics of programming.

Class 4 Feb. 11 Elizabeth Harper Lighting Design Lecture 4 - Collaboration and the Tech Process

How to make it through tech when it feels like everyone is watching you. An introduction to the electricians team, the use of jargon, tropes and clichés when cuing and programming. How to focus a show. Tech schedules, electricians and lighting team jobs and tech etiquette.

Reading: Gillette Chapter 14: Lighting Design Pages 379-382

Lab 4 Feb. 12 Assignment Cue list

Use the song “Prologue (We Might Play All Night” from *Passing Strange* (available on Spotify). Create a spread sheet cue sheet as if you’re cuing the song in a review-style concert (i.e. you do not have to conceptualize the song as it fits within the show.) Your sheet must include: Cue number, approximate cue time, where to call the cue (timing and lyric), and a description of the movement and color of each cue. You may assume you have any type of light you’d like available to use.

Class 5 Feb. 18 Elizabeth Harper Lighting Design Lecture 5 – Designer Presentations

Lighting designer presentations.

Lab 5 Feb 19 Duncan Mahoney Costume shop online lab

- Basics of buttons, snaps, hems, general stitching
- Identifying washable fabrics from Dry Cleaning fabrics
- How to operate the washing machine and dryer

Class 6 Feb. 25 Takeshi Kata Set Design Lecture 1 - Creative Process 1

We will go over the Basic Terminology and characteristics associated with each type of space and Scenery type. We will also Discuss understanding a space through surveying, drafting and sketching.

Assignment (Due weeks 9 and 10): Research a professional Scenic Designer assigned to you. Prepare a 5-7 minute presentation about the designer - include photos/drawings of their work. Find out what their philosophy is and what they find important as a designer.

Reading: Gillette Chapter 4 (pg.52-57 & 71-75), Chapter 9 (163-173),

Lab 6 Feb. 26 Assignment Room Survey

At your home, survey and measure your bedrooms as though it will be used for drafting. (You will use the surveys to draft for 132b class). Make sure to do a rough plan of the room and rough elevation of the walls first, then start measuring the space, adding the dimensions in your rough plan and elevations. Scan the rough survey with information and labels and submit them in BB by 8 am on March 4th.

Class 7 Mar. 4 Takeshi Kata Set Design Lecture 2 – Creative Process 2 and Technical Process

We will go through the Scenic Design Process Tools and Scenic components. Understanding the pieces that create a space and crafting a creative process for the designing scenery. Understanding plating order for a drafting package-How do you break up all the information?

Reading: Gillette Chapter 4 (pg. 52-75) and Chapter 9 (pg. 173 – 180), Woodbridge Chapter 5 (pg.35-41)

Lab 7 Mar. 5 Assignment Sketching your room and Plating Order

Get together as the assigned groups and help each other create a rough drafting plating order for your bedroom drafting. Using your bedroom survey, figure out which wall to remove as the “4th wall” of your room as if it were a set. In 131b and 132b, you will draft a GP, CL Section and Elevation of 3 walls of your bedroom. What order do they go in? How should each plate be laid out? Using outlines and the overall dimensions, create rough plates that show how the information will be organized.

Class 8 Mar. 11 Takeshi Kata Set Design Lecture 3 – Terminology and Communication

From ideas to execution. We will cover Shop Personnel, what goes in a Scenic Design Package and a Design Folder. We will also cover Model building basics. **Reading: Gillette Chapter 9 (pg. 180-187), Chapter 13 (pg. 316-323)**

Lab 8 Mar. 12 Duncan Mahoney Lumber as a material

Reading: Gillette. 209-221, BH 120-130

- How to differentiate hardwoods and softwoods
- Types of common dimensional lumber used in theater
- Types of sheetstock used in theater

Class 9 Mar. 18 Takeshi Kata Set Design Lecture 4 - Putting it all Together

We will go through the Process from beginning to finish looking at some examples of actual designs. We'll discuss working with directors, other designers and shops. **Reading: Gillette Chapter 4 (pg. 58-71). Scenic Designer Presentations 1-5**

Lab 9 Mar. 19 Duncan Mahoney Other Scenic materials, metal and plastic

Reading: Gillette 237-246, 284-285, 338-344, BH 111-120, 141-149

- Types of metal in common use in theater
- How metal is sized and sold

- The difference between tube and pipe
- Methods and hardware used to join metal
- Types of foam in use in theater
- Flame retardancy concerns for foam and fabric
- Types of plastic in use in theater
- Common types of fabric in use in theater

Class 10 Mar. 25 Takeshi Kata Set Design Lecture 5
Complete Scenic Designer Presentations

Lab 10 Mar. 26 Duncan Mahoney Fasteners
Reading: Gillette: 221-234, BH 49-83 nails, staples, screws, & bolts

Class 11 Apr. 1 Duncan Mahoney Power Tools and power tool safety
Reading: Gillette: 188-209; Safety is Specific document on BlackBoard

Lab 11 Apr.2 Duncan Mahoney Equipment training lab as assigned

Note: The labs will be concurrent for the next 4 weeks, either on zoom or in person if allowed.
You will be assigned to a group A, B, C, or D

Group A lab: in TTL for Tool Training:

- Learn how to operate portable and stationary woodworking power tools
- Learn how to operate portable and stationary metal working power tools
- Learn where hand and power tools are kept in the TTL

Group B lab: in the Bing Theatre for equipment training:

- The Basics of focusing lighting instruments: ellipsoidal, Fresnel
- DMX and Basic Programming of the Ion Board
- Introduction to the Clearcom System
- How to work the Fly Rail
- Safe use of the personnel lifts

Group C lab: in the Massman Theatre for equipment training

- Basic Sound System information
- How to turn on the Sound Computer – basic information on QLab
- Basic information on the Massman Lighting system
- Safe ladder usage
- Troubleshooting and repair of lighting equipment

Group D lab: in the Costume Shop for equipment training

- Learning how to operate a sewing machine
- Learning how to operate an iron and steamer
- How to operate the washing machine and dryer

Class 12 Apr. 8 Duncan Mahoney Rigging
Reading: Gillette. 59-68, 229-235. BH 84-107

Lab 12 Apr. 9 Duncan Mahoney Equipment training Labs
Group B: TTL, Group C: Bing, Group D: Massman, Group A: Costume Shop

Class 13 Apr. 15 Duncan Mahoney Special Effects
Reading: SDA Weapons Policy on Blackboard

Lab 13 Apr. 16 Duncan Mahoney Equipment training Labs
Group C: TTL, Group D: Bing, Group A: Massman, Group B: Costume Shop

Class 14 Apr. 22 No Lecture WELLNESS DAY

Lab 14 Apr. 23 Duncan Mahoney Equipment training Labs
Group D: TTL, Group A: Bing, Group B: Massman, Group C: Costume Shop

Class 15 Apr. 29 Duncan Mahoney Technical Direction #4 Paint, glue and chemical safety
Reading: Gillette pages 227-228, 286-315, Chemical Safety handouts on BB, BH 132-140.

Lab 15 Apr. 30 No Lab WELLNESS DAY

Final Examination Date: Wed. May 12, 8:00am-10:00am.

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.

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. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

