

USC School of Dramatic Arts

SEMINAR in THEATER DESIGN THTR 431

Spring 2021

Fridays 9:00 - 11:50AM

Location: ZOOM

Instructor: Terry Ann Gordon

Office: ONLINE: tgordon@usc.edu

Reply: via EMAIL within 24 hrs

TEXT Cell: 818-636-2729

Course Description and Overview

THTR 431 Senior Seminar in Theatrical Design is designed to offer design students an opportunity to meet working professionals in each students specific field of study. These fields include Stage, Television, Film and Entertainment.

Throughout the semester, students will be exposed to different aspects of “the business” and may discover career paths not previously considered. The 431 students will be required to research career and job opportunities to present for class discussion.

Students will participate in a variety of panels with guest lecturers/professionals from the entertainment world. Each student will have one on one interview and Q&A opportunities, as well as independent portfolio/online reviews with the professional panels.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn how to interview, interface, communicate with entertainment professionals.

The course objective is to introduce and reinforce students knowledge of current work trends and job expectations in the professional working world .

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: An understanding of accepted Theatrical/Entertainment terminology to facilitate discussion and interaction with Industry professionals. Professionals from various production departments and venues will be included in the panels.

Required Materials

Computer: access to USC Zoom via Blackboard course portal.

All course information will be accessed through the Blackboard course portal.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Online Etiquette:

1. Students are expected to be alert, attentive, polite and participatory in all discussions and activities.
2. Online etiquette is expected: No eating, or gum chewing. Beverages are acceptable.
3. Dress appropriately as you would for class and meeting professionals for possible employment. Remember, “You only get one chance to make a first impression”
4. Be on time
5. Have a quiet and non distracting area established for Zoom class. Do not attend from bed!
6. Do not have back lighting as the light flares for all viewers.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

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

70%: Prep and participation at all sessions: each class is worth 5%

1. Preparation for visiting panelists/professional guests includes researching all panelists and creating specific profession based questions of your own or:

Required PRE-Research of guest panelists:

WHO: you must research each panelist/professional participant:

“Know who’s in the room” find points of interest to discuss

WHAT: is their job, what did you learn...anything unexpected??

WHERE: do they work, where did they study, etc

WHEN: did they begin working in the business

HOW: did they start in the business

2. 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 guests are taking time out of busy schedules and your absence will be considered

rude and unprofessional. Arriving more than 10 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 each unexcused absence.

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.

30%: Final: presentation of semester’s panel reviews and critiques:

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. This could also be a bullet point presentation.

Each review should include your observations, panel value to you, pros and cons:

1. Description of the guest panelist’s job duties.
2. Unexpected information: what did you learn that surprised you
3. Evaluate if this panel offers the possibility of a career option.
4. Will you contact any guests following graduation.
5. Feel free to discuss pros and cons of the panel ie: was it of any value to you.

Reviews must be well documented, organized and presented via Instructor’s email during the class final exam period.

DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!! DO NOT WAIT TIL THE END OF THE SEMESTER TO WRITE YOUR SESSION REVIEWS. If you write them weekly, following each session, you will NOT stress at the end of the semester when they are due for your final!! All reviews are due during the final exam session. It is your final. You should have 1 review for each panel. Extensions will not be available!

Sessions Semester calendar

The class schedule 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. 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 and survey**

Assignment 1: For next class session, prepare to present:

- your current resume
- share 2 samples of professional resumes you admire.
- share possible business card designs you'd like for yourself.
- research and share your favorite professional Industry website

Week 2 **Present resumes, business card designs, and websites as presented week 1**

Week 3-14 **Class Panels and Schedule: Tentative and open to change**

Due to panelists availability, this course schedule and students must be flexible. I will work toward announcing the schedule and panelists for the month, at the beginning of each month.

Tentative panels TBA:

- LA Opera
- CTG
- National touring productions (PSM)
- Designers and Department Crew heads: Film, TV, commercials, videos
- Local theatrical organizations
- LACMA: Exhibition Design
- Local scenic shops (Cal Theming, Scenic Route, ABC, Trio etc...)
- Local rental shops (props, event and theatre lighting, film lighting, etc...)
- Getty Villa-Theatre venue
- Bezark Themed entertainment
- Disneyland / Imagineering(backstage)
- Mark Taper, Dorothy Chandler, Kirk Douglas Theater
- Equity Waiver theater
- CrossRoads Escape Room, Theme park production

Guest Panelists: TBA

- Guild and IATSE Union Locals Reps: USA, 892, 705, 829
- 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

We will have the following Wellness days throughout the semester but no spring break: March 12 & 23, April 7, 22,30. Our last class session will be April 23..

Final Examination Date: Friday, May 7 ... 8:00-10:00 AM (TBA)

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, (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://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 Contract 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 as noted on page one of the syllabus.

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

Student Name (Print)

Date

Signature

Cell # _____