

USC School of Dramatic Arts

Theatre 330
Fall 2021

Set Design I
Tu/Th—10-11:50am



Location: KAP164 & online

Instructor: Sibyl Wickersheimer

Office: JEF 200

Office Hours: Before or after class by appointment
You must make an appointment!

Contact Info: sawicker@usc.edu

Fall 2017
model for 'Dutchman' by Edina Hiser '19

Course Description and Overview

The dramatic relationship between text, space and performers through script analysis, development of visual ideas, methods of communication and execution as applied to scenic design. Students will learn and use techniques such as research, collage, sketching, perspective sketching, model making, and verbal presentation skills to communicate designs for the stage.

Learning Objectives

Goals for the class are to learn the process of designing stage sets for theatrical productions and live performance by completing designs as class assignments and examining the work of designers past and present. The assignments will present varied design challenges, allowing students to explore theatrical space and to practice developing skills that students can keep in their 'tool kit'. By the end of the class, students will be able to communicate their stage designs via storyboards, sketches, orthographic drawings, models, and text.

Recommended Preparation: THTR 130/131, and/or 230

Course Notes

Class will be taught in person, occasionally using zoom for class sessions that are lecture or discussion only. Students will be expected to silence cell phones during all class sessions and put them on table at front of the room when we are together in a classroom.

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, and reading materials will be available through purchase of hard copies, online in Blackboard, or online library & ARES access. Synchronous class

sessions will be recorded as much as possible and recordings will be 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).

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Please note that you will need an operational computer to for some 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. Students can set up a Design lab account to use SDA Design Lab computers 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 [USC Technology Rental Program Application](#).

[USC Technology Support Links](#)

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

Required and Supplementary Materials

Texts available online through Blackboard & ARES:

1. Ch 1 from [Theatres](#) by Gaelle Breton
2. Intro and Chapter 1 from [The Scenographic Imagination](#), by Darwin Reid Payne
3. *The Sandbox* by Edward Albee
4. Exerpts from Model Making: Materials and Methods
5. Exerpts from Designer Drafting and Visualization
6. Exerpts from Theatrical Design&Production
7. *The Eliot Trilogy* by Quiara Hudes (*Eliot A Soldier's Fugue, Water by the Spoonful, and The Happiest Song Plays Last*)
8. Exerpt from Sculpting Spaces, interview with John Lee Beatty
9. Ch. 1 from [One Place After Another](#), by Miwon Kwon
10. Excerpt from Film Directing, Shot by Shot, by Steven D. Katz
11. Excerpt from Dream Worlds by Hans Bacher
12. Article by Andrew Todd, *Theatre Architecture: Convivial or Imperious?*
13. Numerous reading assignments via Journal and blog links, Emergence, e-scenography

Supplemental books (not required to purchase/suggested purchase for BFA Design students):

Model Making: Materials & Methods by David Neat

Designer Drafting and Visualization, 2nd Edition by Patricia Woodbridge (same text for 409 & 435)

Theatrical Design & Production, 7th ed. by J. Michael Gillette (already purchased for 131/132ab)

Sculpting Space in the Theater by Babak Ebrahimian

Materials :

These tools are necessary to purchase during the first week. We will discuss this list on the first day of class. Materials must be brought to class but cannot be stored in classroom.

sketchbook - white paper – no lines – at least 8”x10”

Architectural scale rule

#2 pencils & Drafting pencils

Erasers and eraser shield

18”x 24” pad of drafting vellum (can be shared)

T-square

Drafting triangle, adjustable or 30/60

Exacto knife and blades

metal straight edge ruler (preferably a ‘Cutting Rail’ brand with raised edge)

Black foam core, chip board, illustration board and card stock as needed

Glues – Sobo, Tacky glue & hot glue

Straight pins/push pins/T-pins

Masking tape

Cutting matt – at least 18”x24”

Additional materials may be needed per project, including:

Various acrylic paints or watercolors

Various brushes

Art supplies can be purchased at these local stores (*call or check websites first*):

Graphaids, 10003 Washington Blvd, Culver City, CA 90232, <https://www.graphaids.com/>

Raw Materials Art Supplies, 645 S. Los Angeles Street, LA, CA 90014, <https://rawmaterials-la.com/>

Architect’s Corner, 1324 S. Flower St., Los Angeles, CA 90015, www.architectscornerla.com

Grading Criteria, Assessment of Assignments, Assignment Submission Policy

Work in class will be mostly project based work. All projects and assignments will be graded using a point system and grading rubric is attached at the end of the syllabus (also posted in BB). Reading assignments will be expected to be completed before the following class session after they are assigned; students will be asked to post in discussion forums on blackboard prior to class session. When turning in homework files, please save files to be under 5MB and name files according to this system:

NAME_330_PROJECTNAME_DATE for example: **WICKERSHEIMER_330_SANDBOX_08292019.pdf**

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.

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-three week turn around is likely. You may always inquire about your grade, but 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 during pre-arranged, scheduled office hours. I encourage you to make an appointment to meet with me at least once during the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment	Points
Sandbox Writing assignment #1	10
Discussion/Forum #1	5
Discussion/Forum #2	5
Discussion/Forum #3	5
Sandbox Model & Design	20
Eliot Trilogy storyboards	10
Eliot Trilogy Research, Design & Presentation	60
Eliot Trilogy Drafting	40
Floor Plan taping project	20
Model-Making exercise	20
Final Exam Project	50
Attendance/Class & Group Participation	25
Total	270

Grading Scale

Point values are assigned to individual projects & assignments listed above. The final course grade is based on the following percentages of your accumulated points divided by the total points possible for all assignments (310):

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week 4

Tues. 9/14

Sandbox Design Presentations

Assignments: Read Anna Veibrook models (blackboard), Ming Cho Lee models (blackboard), Rachel Hauck article

EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.

Thur. 9/16

Sandbox Design Presentations

Assignments: Read *Eliot, A Soldier's Fugue*, & *Water by the Spoonful*

Week 5

Tues. 9/21

Lecture: Research & the Design Process/Presentation
Discuss *Eliot Trilogy*, start groups

Assignments: Read Happiest Song Plays Last and begin script breakdowns and research Assignment (due 10/01)

Thur. 9/23

Lecture: Scenic Designers Lecture, part 2

Assignments: Groups complete script breakdowns, and work on designs
Read Storyboard excerpt from *Shot by Shot* and *Dream Worlds excerpt* by Bacher (p.56-100)

Week 6

The Wolves (field trip – SDA production of *The Wolves*)

Discussion forum #1, critical response to the use of theatrical space in *The Wolves*.

Tues. 9/28

Bring sketchbooks!

Lecture: Storyboarding & Dutchman exercise

Assignment: *Eliot Trilogy* Storyboards & Set Design

Thur. 9/30

Eliot Trilogy Research Due

Model Building Demo – Audience risers and seating

Work in class in groups, , plan Museum/gallery visit

Assignment: Read Model-Making Chapter 2

Week 7

Tues. 10/5

Storyboards due, individual and groups

check in on Model theatres, rough ground plan & audience layout due

Assignment: Read David Zinn interview, *American Theatre* (BlackBrd)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Thur. 10/7
Assignment: Model Audience due, work in class on *Eliot Trilogy* models
Read 'Hand sketching' (Blackboard)

Discussion forum #2, critical response to museum/gallery visit in context of design inspiration.

Week 8

Tues. 10/12
Assignment: *Eliot Trilogy* group work time
In class demo: light and photograph models
Model photographs

Thur. 10/14
Fall Recess **NO CLASS**

Week 9

Tues. 10/19
Lecture: *Eliot Trilogy* **Presentations**
Elements of a Full Design Package
Assignments: Read Ch. 3 & 5 Designer Drafting and Visualization,
measurements and notes from your models to start drafting

Thur. 10/21
Assignment: *Eliot Trilogy* **Presentation**
Start *Eliot Trilogy* ground plans
Eliot Trilogy Drafting Package (Due 11/12)
Read Chapter 8 Designer Drafting and Visualization...

Week 10

Tues. 10/26
Assignment: *Eliot Trilogy* **Presentation**
Work in class on drafting ground plans, start sections
Read Chapter 9 Designer Drafting and Visualization...

Thurs. 10/28
Eliot Trilogy **Presentation**
Ground Plan Due
Work on Section drawing in class

(virtual field trip)

Online Performance – TBA stay tuned for details. Discussion forum #3, critical response.

Week 11

Tues. 11/2
Assignment: Section Due
Start drafting Elevations in class

Thurs. 11/4
Assignment: Complete Drafting Package Due, B&W full set prints
Floor taping assignment, meet with partners

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week 12

Tues. 11/9

Meet outside scene shop – Floor taping, bring in plan with notes and measurements for taping

Thurs. 11/11

Model Wall : Demo and step #1
Start Site Specific discussions

Week 13

Tues. 11/16

Model Wall : Demo and step #2

Thur. 11/18

Model Wall : paint, step #3
Assignments: Read Ch.1 from One Place After Another (reader), Start research for Final project, E

Week 14

Tues. 11/23

Model Wall Due
Lecture: Non-Theatre/Site Specific Performances
Assignments: Final project concepts and site selection
Read: Emergence/PQ book, and article 'Love on San Pedro'

Tues. 11/25

Thanksgiving Recess **NO CLASS**
Read/review <https://ecoscenography.com/>

Week 15

Tues. 11/30

Discuss Site Challenges, Site Plan, Scale, Budget
Groups meet with Sibyl
Assignments: Prelim Site Plan

Thur. 12/2

Prelim Site Plan
Group work for Final project

Week 16

Tuesday 12/14 8am-10am

FINAL EXAM = SITE SPECIFIC DESIGN PRESENTATIONS

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. Mid semester evaluations will be conducted by individual faculty members in class.

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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 GFS 120 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) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (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.

Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (<https://osas.usc.edu/>).

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <http://bit.ly/sdasupport>

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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

<https://osas.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.

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.