

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

## **THTR 397/497 Theatre Practicum**

**Fall/Spring—MTWThF—6-10PM and other times as assigned, SA & SU 10AM-10PM (1 week)**

**Location: SDA Theatres & Labs**

<http://dramaticarts.usc.edu/theatres-labs/overview.aspx>

**Section: 63107**

**Production Design Emphasis**

**Instructor: Els Collins**

**Chair of Production and Stage Management: Els Collins**

**Office Hours: by appointment**

**Contact Info: [ecollins@usc.edu](mailto:ecollins@usc.edu) (213) 821-4034 Phone**

### **Course Description and Overview**

Substantive participation in the productions comprising the School of Dramatic Arts curated mainstage season of plays. Productions are anchored by SDA faculty who guide, mentor and collaborate with enrolled 397/497 students who will prepare a theatrical text to culminate in public performance housed in one of the school's performance venues. Design, technical direction, stage management assignments are made by the SDA Production faculty and acting assignments are by audition.

### **Learning Objectives**

Our undergraduate programs are anchored by principles aimed at developing artists who can exercise the interdependence of artistic practice and understand theatre as a collaborative art form. This course provides each population of artists the opportunity to develop their specific skill set within the context of a shared collaborative project. These are stated below:

All 397/497 participants/enrollees will:

- Cultivate collaborative and respectful interaction between themselves and all participants in the process, including actors, designers, technical directors and stage managers, as well as with their Practicum Leaders (Directors).
- Cultivate curiosity about diverse artistic regimens and expertise toward the common goal of the actualization of a theatrical production.
- Follow all USC COVID-19 Protocols:
  - wearing a medical grade mask at all rehearsals
  - maintaining safe spacing between yourself and others
  - following proper hand cleaning hygiene
  - along with all other protocols outlined at: <https://we-are.usc.edu/>

- Follow SDA's COVID-19 Practicum protocols in order to perform unmasked:
  - signing an agreement to abide by testing schedules and mask compliance
  - adhering to the testing guidelines and schedule through closing
  - refraining from eating or drinking anything other than water as necessary in the rehearsal room

Actors are expected to:

- Obtain and hone a working knowledge of the interface between actor, text, theatrical event and audience across a range of social contexts, historical periods, performance styles and cultures.
- Acquire and hone a practical understanding of rehearsal processes, costume fitting etiquette and performance protocol in live theatre.
- Acquire and hone a practical understanding of open and effective communication between director and actor, stage management and actor, castmate to castmate peer interaction, as well as being an ensemble member.
- Acquire professional based tools for making requests, addressing issues/concerns, and positive conflict resolution.
- Apply their developing physical, vocal and emotional skills to performances in productions that are mounted in the School's performing venues.

Designers are expected to:

- Put into practice skills learned in classes, including current technology and understanding of materials, methods and techniques used in the shops and onstage. Hone the process of actualizing designs from concept to realization, while exhibiting a working knowledge of the relationship between actor, text, theatrical event and audience across a range of social contexts, historical periods, performance styles and cultures.
- Document work for inclusion in a professional design portfolio.

Stage Managers are expected to:

- Acquire and hone the logistical and intuitive abilities to manage people, schedules, communication, and the organization of space, time and materials necessary to realize a production experience.
- Gain a practical understanding of the relations between a stage manager, all artistic staff (designers and technicians and assistant stage managers) and actors.
- Facilitate communication.
- Collaborate with directors and actors and ASMs (if applicable) throughout the rehearsal process, to support the creative life of rehearsals, and to maintain the production after the director's departure.
- Read and interpret production paperwork and drawings: schedules, scenic ground plans, sections, and elevations, props lists, light plots, and magic

sheets; costume renderings and plots; and sound plots. Practical familiarity with computer programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel.

- Create a working production prompt book, which accurately records all production details from actor movement to tracking of props, scenery, costumes and placement of all ephemeral design cues.
- Work closely with ASM (if applicable) in the direction of deck and costume crew members.
- Learning and utilizing the chain of command effectively to resolve issues which arise.

Technical Directors are expected to:

- Improve and hone their skills in managerial functions required in the technical operations of a theatre, including supervision of personnel, scheduling of facilities and personnel, budget development, materials and equipment acquisition, record keeping, and maintenance of equipment and facilities.
- Improve their ability to translate designer plans, renderings, models, and/or sketches into realized production elements and to develop and communicate technological solutions via technical drafting, sketching, and structural analysis, both by hand and with appropriate computer software.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Co-Requisite (s):** None

**Concurrent Enrollment:** None

**Recommended Preparation:** None

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

The play's script to be presented and such research materials as the director may deem necessary for a particular project. Students are informed which specific texts are to be used and are provided the publishing information to acquire these texts. When possible, actors and production designers and stage managers will be provided with a copy of the text prior to the start of rehearsals. (Musicals, original plays, etc.)

### **Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments**

THTR 397/497 projects are directed and graded by the SDA Faculty of record for each respective section. In addition to the section's faculty of record, all grades will also reflect the evaluations of the Practicum Leader (Director) and area SDA Technical Staff specifically in the areas of Professionalism and Rehearsal Process.

Grading will be determined by the following as defined below and according to the appropriate grading matrix and timeline for your discipline which is an addendum to this syllabus:

1- Preparation	10%
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2- Professionalism	20%
3- Process	30%
4- Performance	40%

Separate Riders and Grading Matrices are available for Design, Stage Management and Technical Direction, and Acting students.

### **Grading Breakdown**

**These expectations constitute the bulk of your graded experience. In addition to these may be other assignments that happen out of the specific rehearsal process.**

The final letter grade 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)

### **Preparation 10%**

#### **Actors are expected:**

- To arrive at rehearsals and fittings on time, ready to work, focused on the work at hand.
- Unscheduled conflicts will be considered absences

#### **Sound Design, Scenic and Lighting Design Students are expected:**

- To read, understand and support the script prior to design meetings
- To fill out the Design Vision sheet prior to the first design meeting
- To be prepared at initial design meetings to discuss verbally or schematically the needs of the script and to discuss the scope of the production
- To be prepared with ideas for design and production meetings
- To visit the shop or load in often and as necessary in order to communicate with TD, ATD, Sound Supervisor, carpenters, theatre managers, sound supervisors, painters, etc.
- To attend a Shop Consult to present your design to the staff.
- To attend 2-3 hours of rehearsals in the first week of rehearsals.
- To attend 4-5 hours of Design Consults in the theatre space the weekend before tech rehearsals

#### **Costume Design Students are expected:**

- To read, understand and support the script prior to design meetings
- To fill out the design vision sheet prior to the first design meeting.
- To engage with your Mentor and Assistant throughout the process of your Design and into your portfolio build.
- To be prepared at initial design meetings to discuss verbally or visually the needs of the script and to discuss the scope of the costume needs by sharing a costume breakdown and highlighting potential larger needs for the other Designers to use.

- Be ready to present your designs, process, and research throughout the design and construction process.
- To attend 2-3 hours of rehearsals in the first week of rehearsals and when the needs of the production require you to do so. To attend meet and greet, tech, dress rehearsals, opening night, strike, stock return and portfolio instruction.
- To attend measurement and fittings with students scheduled with stage management.
- To attend 4-5 hours of Design Consults in the costume shop the Friday before dress rehearsals train your Costume Crew. To organize strike with your team and clothing return with your assistant.

**Technical Directors are expected:**

- To read, understand and support the script prior to design meetings
- To fill out the Design Vision sheet prior to the first design meeting
- To be prepared with ideas for design and production meetings
- To visit the shop or load in at least daily in order to communicate with TD, ATD, Sound Supervisor, carpenters, painters, etc.
- To attend 2-3 hours of rehearsals in the first week of rehearsals.
- To attend 4-5 hours of Design Consults in the theatre space the weekend before tech rehearsals
- To facilitate technical elements at tech and dress rehearsals

**Stage Managers are expected:**

- To read, understand and support the script prior to design meetings
- To fill out relevant thematic portions of the Design Vision sheet prior to the first design meeting
- Create an overall timeline noting all milestones for your production, including but not limited to; preliminary design meeting, auditions, first production meeting, first rehearsal, designer milestones, load-in, focus, meet & greet, tech schedule, program copy due date, dress rehearsal and performance dates.
- To attend and facilitate all rehearsals.
- To facilitate scheduling of initial design meetings
- To attend and facilitate production meetings
- To attend the THTR 130 class on the appropriate day for the Stage Manager meeting (Sept. 6, 2022 in THH 210 at 9:00AM)

**Professionalism 20%**

**Actors are expected:**

- To attend all costume measurement and fitting appointments as scheduled
- To learn lines by the deadlines required by the Practicum Leader
- To be quiet and respectful when their colleagues are rehearsing
- To be attentive to entrances and exits.

- To be responsible for all blocking and movement as presented by the director
- To acknowledge and incorporate director's notes
- To be in costume and make-up by the time the house opens
- To be quiet when not on stage
- To be responsible for their individual entrances and exits
- To be responsible for all personal props and wardrobe

**Sound Design, Scenic and Lighting Design Students are expected:**

- To collaborate with faculty, staff, peers and advisors
- To acknowledge and incorporate director's notes
- To meet all design deadlines as outlined by production faculty and staff
- To be interested and involved in design execution and the needs of the production

**Costume Designers are expected:**

- To understand and support the script and Practicum Leader's approach to the material.
- To participate in a collaborative process with the other Designers. To learn to guide, develop and nurture your working relationship with your Assistant. To participate in and learn from the shop Staff, appointed Mentor and production Staff.
- To learn the art of measurement taking and etiquette, budgeting for a show, and the process of a clothing build, a clothing pull, photo journal of process and fittings.
- To learn the process of putting together your final costume vision together for the stage and to add your photos and show description to your evolving digital portfolio.

**Technical Directors are expected:**

- To collaborate with faculty, staff, peers and advisors
- To acknowledge and act upon notes from the designer, stage manager, and director, referring design notes from other sources to the designer before acting on them
- To meet all deadlines for budgets, working drawings, layouts, scenery movement plots and special effects as outline by production faculty and staff
- To be available, on time, present and ready to work on the production at all times possible during the production period

**Stage Managers are expected:**

- To set and maintain levels of courtesy and discipline
- To have an excellent working relationship with the shops

**Process 30%**

**Actors are expected:**

- To be flexible and open in the rehearsal process
- Rehearse in attire suitable to the ongoing physical/ psychological development of the role assigned at his/her casting (for ex: rehearsal skirts, proper footwear)
- To be willing to investigate alternative solutions and ready to offer their own ideas
- To work as needed with dialect and vocal coaches and fight and intimacy choreographers
- To assist in the setting up and breaking down of rehearsal as needed for efficient use of time in rehearsals

**Sound Design, Scenic and Lighting Design Students are expected:**

- To attend selective rehearsals including the designer run-through and scheduled meetings with the Practicum Leader and design faculty
- To be actively involved in the technical execution of deliverables
- To understand and support the script and the director's vision

**Costume Design Students are expected:**

- To understand and support the Practicum Leader's approach
- To participate in and learn from measurements and fittings.
- To communicate and interface well with the Practicum Leader, Designers, Mentors, Assistant, costume staff and other production members.

**Technical Directors are expected:**

- To faithfully execute the design as approved by the designer and the Practicum Leader
- To attend the designer run-through, all production meetings, and design meetings as invited or necessary
- To attend all technical rehearsals and dress rehearsals, or for productions with minimal tech and pending the agreement of the stage manager, to be on-call at a location no more than 3 minutes from the theatre after completing any notes.
- To train the stagehands in the safe and effective use of the set and any backstage systems or effects
- Create any needed scenery movement & storage plots with the designer and stage manager

**Stage Managers are expected:**

- To run all callback auditions and rehearsals including technical rehearsals
- If the production has understudies, to prepare understudies to perform with the assistance of the practicum leader, assistant director, dance captain, musical director, etc.

- To encourage actors to assist with the setting up and breaking down of rehearsals as needed for efficient use of time in the rehearsals
- Take roll
- To be effective in tone and information conveyed in rehearsal reports
- To provide accurate program copy to the Communications Office per the timeline established
- To provide breakdowns for Fight Choreography, Intimacy Choreography and any live flame to Chair of Production and Stage Management
- To record all blocking, movement and potential cues
- To keep updated paperwork – contact sheets, calendars, props lists, etc.
- To serve as prompter as needed or to train another student to prompt
- To provide a final blocking/calling script to the Head of Stage Management for review and grading

**Public Performance/Quality of Design/Performance 40%**

**Actors are expected:**

- To integrate all of the rehearsal process to include physical, vocal and dialect work as appropriate to the production
- To execute the themes, tone and style of the play as directed by the practicum leader
- To perform as a member of the ensemble
- To attend and participate in the strike

**Sound Design, Scenic and Lighting Design Students are expected:**

- To attend a performance to see their work in front of an audience
- To have understood and fulfilled the duties and responsibilities of the design assignment to the best of their abilities
- To provide presentation/portfolio level documentation of designs
- To have demonstrated growth as an artist and storyteller
- To attend and participate in the strike

**Costume Design Students are expected:**

- Present research and/or drawings to mentor, Practicum Leader and costume staff in a timely manner. (Including the actors in this process as needed).
- To attend 2-3 hours of rehearsals in the first week of rehearsals and when the needs of the production require you to do so. To attend meet and greet, tech, and dress rehearsals. To attend the opening night performance to see their work in front of an audience
- Developing skills at pulling from stock. Developing skills at shopping for fabric and online. Develop a complete ensemble ready to be fit (including shoes) for fittings. Developing fitting etiquette and notes that are precise and understandable
- To create a costume bible - this includes pieces list (Costume item sheets), measurements (participation in the measurement process), drawings, etc.

also, including costume staff in discussions and drawings from potential builds.

- To attend the opening night performance to see their work in front of an audience

**Technical Directors are expected:**

- To attend the opening night performance to see their work in front of an audience
- To have understood and fulfilled the duties and responsibilities of a technical director to the best of their abilities
- To run any particularly complicated or dangerous special effects during rehearsals and performances
- To be available from the Stage Manager's call time until "places" for last minute notes
- To provide portfolio quality documentation of the assignment
- To have demonstrated growth as a project manager, engineer, artist and craftsman
- To attend and participate in strike

**Stage Managers are expected:**

- To run all performances including coordination with the house manager
- To run all performances including giving notes as needed to actors.
- To oversee the assignments of the crew to facilitate the smooth running of the performance
- To attend and participate in the strike

**All students participating in the production are required to attend and participate in the strike. Closed-toed shoes are required for all technical rehearsals and for strike.**

**Proposed Schedule:**

**Actors:**

- The normal rehearsal period for a THTR 397/497 is 6-8 weeks including the week of performance.
- Rehearsals take place 6:00pm-10:00pm Monday-Friday and 5 hours on Saturday between the hours of 10AM-4PM
- Students in the THTR 397/497 project are "on call" for all scheduled rehearsals.

**Design Students:**

**Sound Design, Scenic and Lighting Design Students are expected:**

- Will be given due dates for drawings, renderings, lighting and speaker plots, etc. as appropriate by design faculty in consultation with SDA production staff.
- Designers are required to attend all tech rehearsals and dress rehearsals for their project.

**Costume Design Students are expected:**

- Being prepared with a complete ensemble ready to be fit (including shoes) for fittings. Developing skills at pulling from stock. Developing skills at shopping. Fitting notes are precise and understandable.
- Present research and/or drawings to Mentor, Practicum Leader and Costume Staff in a timely manner. (Including the actors in this process as needed).

**Design Students:**

**Production Assistants in all areas of Design:**

- Production Assistants for Set, Costume, and Lighting Design are required to attend all tech rehearsals and dress rehearsals for their project.
- The normal rehearsal period for a THTR 397 is 6-8 weeks including the week of performances. During these weeks the Design Assistant will be asked to help the Designer in areas related to their assignment. Model building, purchasing supplies, checking in with shops or area heads, and keeping paperwork updated are all valid. Mostly though, it is intended for the Assistants to 'shadow' their designers in order to learn the process of designing and communicating during SDA productions.

**Stage Managers:**

**Stage Managers are expected:**

- The normal rehearsal period for a THTR 397/497 is 6-8 weeks including the week of performance.
- Stage Managers are called a half hour early for rehearsals which take place 6:00pm-10:00PM and 5 hours TBD on one weekend day. They may be called to stay a half hour later for each rehearsal to conclude paperwork.
- To attend all auditions and rehearsals
- To help facilitate all areas of the production

**Guidelines on Grading**

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Preparation	100	10
Professionalism	200	20
Process	300	30
Performance	400	40
<b>TOTAL</b>	1000	100

**Assignment Submission Policy**

Assignments will be submitted according to the guidelines provided by the design and stage management faculty mentors and practicum leaders (Directors).

### **Additional Policies**

Acting students will be penalized for missing rehearsals. Design and stage management students will be held accountable for their deadlines in submitting paperwork, drawings, plots, etc.

### **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

The weekly schedule varies according to the discipline of the student taking this class and to the section. Because of the variety of dates associated with each section and the range of activities of the students, the materials needed for each week necessarily varies in nature and timing. Assignments for designers and stage managers are spelled out in timeline documents which are provided to each student at the beginning of the class.

### **Final Examination Date:**

The final for this class is the final performance, or portfolio review in the case of designers and stage managers.

## **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 exemptions 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.

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*\*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](http://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 Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto: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.

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### **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:**

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite (engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

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### **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: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

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### **Support Systems:**

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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.symlicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symlicity.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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

*Non-emergency assistance or information.*