

Eastern Illinois University  
Department of Theatre Arts  
Fall Semester 2012

## THA 3357: Scene Design

Instructor: Nicholas Shaw  
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581-5958  
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Office Hours: TR 11:00am to 12:00pm  
F 8:30 to 10:30am  
Also by Appointment

Class Meets: MWF 11:00 to 12:40  
Doudna Fine Arts Center 2060

Texts: Scene Design and Stage Lighting, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition by Parker, Wolf, and Block.  
Designer Drafting for the Entertainment World, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition by Patricia Woodbridge.  
The Dramatic Imagination, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Robert Edmond Jones.  
Additional Scripts as needed

Class Description: (3-3-3) Consideration of the design sequence from analysis of the script to the composition of production drawings; practical experience.

Credit Hours: 3.00

### Objectives

1. Develop an understanding of design practices used in theatrical scenic design.
  2. Learn to analyze a script from a scenic design perspective.
  3. Develop research skills in scenic design.
  4. Develop a basic proficiency in theatrical drafting for scenic design.
  5. Develop a scenic design process.
  6. Develop skills in representing initial design decisions through thumb-nail sketches and rough floorplans.
  7. Develop skills in making 2-D representations of scenic designs decisions through creating theatrical floorplans, perspective sketches and renderings.
  8. Develop skills in making 3-D representations of scenic designs through creating white and presentation models.
  9. Develop an appreciation for varied design solutions for theatrical productions.
2. Attendance- Attendance at all class meetings is expected. Two unexcused absences will be permitted. Tests missed on those days cannot be made up (unless the instructor has prior notification). Absences for approved University events and serious illness are excused. In addition, the student will lose 20 POINTS PER ABSENCE over the allotted number (2). Students more than 5 minutes late for class will be considered ABSENT. Two tardies will be counted as an unexcused absence. Students are

required to see all faculty directed productions this semester; *Strindberg Café*, *Almost Maine*, and *Christmas Carol*. A student ticket is \$5.00.

3. Academic Accommodation- If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583

4. Academic Integrity- Committing plagiarism by copying the words or the original ideas of another person without giving that person full and proper credit is an especially serious violation of the University academic dishonesty policy. If you violate this policy you will be reported immediately for disciplinary action. The complete standards of student conduct can be accessed at [www.eiu.edu/~judicial/code.html](http://www.eiu.edu/~judicial/code.html).

5. Cell Phones- Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices. This is a courtesy to your fellow students and myself. This includes TEXTING! Also, headphones are not allowed unless I give permission during an open work session.

6. Paper writing- All papers submitted in this class must have 1.5 spacing and 1" margins on all sides. The font must be 12 point Times New Roman or Arial. Please put your name on each page of a multiple page paper.

## Assignments

1. Critiques- Students are required to see all university productions. A 2-page critique on the scenic design is due after the show closes.

2. Sketch Book- a sketch book must be kept by each student. This is a good place to keep notes for the class as well as notes, sketches, ideas for each of the projects.

3. Research Project- Students will write a 5-page paper and present their designer to the class.. They will choose an American Scene Designer from the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century. Choices must be approved by instructor.

4. Exams- There will be two exams throughout the semester.

5. Shakespeare Project- Students will be divided into groups and will be given a Shakespearean play. The group must develop a concept for their production and present their visual research to the class.

6. Your Room- Students will be developing a box set based on your own room.

    Rendering- A black and white rendering will be created using mechanical perspective.

    White Model- A ¼" white model will be created using draftings from the drafting package.

7. Musical Project- Students will be divided into groups and given a 20<sup>th</sup> century American musical. They will develop a scene breakdown and corresponding ground plans for the entire musical.

8. Final Project- Students will choose a 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century play and develop a color model or rendering.

## Grading

1. Assignments will be due on the day stated in the syllabus. They will be graded within one week of turn in date. Students will have the opportunity to raise their grades by reworking projects and turning them in during finals week. Late projects will reduced one letter grade and cannot be raised by resubmitting. No assignment will be accepted over a week late.

2. Projects will be critiqued and discussed in class. We will work through each phase of a project

throughout the semester and portions of a project will be due prior to the final due date for the project. This is designed to help you keep up with the work throughout the semester. The project discussions are extremely important and will be part of your grade on each project.

3. Students are graded based on their ability to complete each assignment, their growth during the project, on craftsmanship, and on the merit of the design; in that order. A project that fulfills the requirements set forth by the instructor will be guaranteed a C. A project that shows growth in craftsmanship or the artistry of design will merit a better grade.

Attendance and Attitude.....	200 pts.
Sketchbook.....	200 pts.
Critiques (2 @ 75 pts. each).....	150 pts.
Tests (2@ 150 pts. each).....	300 pts.
Research Project.....	150 pts.
Shakespeare Project.....	200 pts.
Your Room Project.....	300 pts.
Final Project.....	300 pts.
Musical Project.....	200 pts.
<b>TOTAL POINTS.....</b>	<b>2000 pts.</b>

A = 90%+ of total points.....1800 – 2000

B = 80-89% of total points....1600 - 1799

C = 70-79% of total points...1400 - 1599

D = 60-69% of total points...1200 - 1399

F = 59% and less.....under 1199

See attached schedule for due dates. Schedule is subject to change.

### List of Materials

Card Stock	Foam Core
Spray Adhesive	Paints
Tacky Glue or Craft Glue	Paint Brushes
X-acto Knife	Drafting Pencils or Lead Holder
18” Steel Edged Ruler	Pink Erasers
Illustration Board	Kneaded Eraser

Sketching Pencils

Markers

Lining Pens

Watercolor Paper

### Definitions of Design

1. Plan: make or work out a plan for; devise; "They contrived to murder their boss"; "design a new sales strategy"; "plan an attack"
2. The act of working out the form of something (as by making a sketch or outline or plan); "he contributed to the design of a new instrument"
3. Plan something for a specific role or purpose or effect; "This room is not designed for work"
4. An arrangement scheme; "the awkward design of the keyboard made operation difficult"; "it was an excellent design for living"; "a plan for seating guests"
5. Create the design for; create or execute in an artistic or highly skilled manner; "Chanel designed the famous suit"
6. Blueprint: something intended as a guide for making something else; "a blueprint for a house"; "a pattern for a skirt"
7. Make a design of; plan out in systematic, often graphic form; "design a better mousetrap"; "plan the new wing of the museum"
8. Create designs; "Dupont designs for the house of Chanel"
9. A preliminary sketch indicating the plan for something; "the design of a building"
10. Invention: the creation of something in the mind

### Definition of Scenery

1. The backdrops, furniture, and other visual accessories that help define the locale and mood of a play.
2. The physical constructions that provide the specific acting environment for a play and that often indicate, by representation, the locale where a scene is set; the physical setting for a scene or play.
3. The painted structures of a stage set that are intended to suggest a particular locale; "they worked all night painting the scenery"

"A stage designer is, in a very real sense, a jack-of-all-trades. They can make blueprints and murals and patterns and light plots. He can design fireplaces and bodices and bridges and wigs. She understands architecture, but is not an architect,... you can paint a portrait, but you're not a painter: creates costumes, but is not a couturier. Although we are able to call upon any or all of these varied gifts at will, we are not concerned with any one of them to the exclusion of the others, nor interested in any one of them for its own sake. These talents are only the tools of our trade... the designer in the theatre is "an artist of occasions." R.E. Jones

Everyone enrolled in this course has the ability to do well. You each have your own strengths and weaknesses; you must identify them and have a plan of attack. You must be present to do well in this class; I mean this in mind and body. Designing Scenery is a very hard and collaborative undertaking. You must be able to communicate your ideas to others affectively and efficiently. We must develop a trust among the class, since we will all be discussing our own designs with each other. All of theatre and design are open for discussion. Theatre should be an extremely personal path to undertake, you must include some of yourself in every design. - Me

## Additional Resources.

A Dozen Questions for Script Analysis For Theatrical Designers

1. Who is the playwright and why did they write the play?
2. What are the central issues of the play?
3. Is the conflict metaphoric?
4. Where is the play set and why is it set there?
5. When is the play set and why?
6. Who are the characters?
7. From the text, what has happened before the play begins?
8. What is the function of each character in the play?
9. What is the mode of dialogue?
10. What is the play's theme?
11. What is the concept for the entire production?
12. How do the design aspects fit into the concept?

## List of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century American Scene Designers

Boris Aronson  
Howard Bay  
John Lee Beatty  
Norman Bel Geddes  
Robert Brill  
Ming Cho Lee  
John Conklin  
Bob Crowley  
Ralph Funicello  
Mordecai Gorelik  
Robert Edmund Jones

Eugene Lee  
Santo Loquasto  
Joe Mielziner  
Donald Oenslager  
David Rockwell  
Oliver Smith  
Joseph Urban  
Robin Wagner  
Tony Walton  
Michael Yergan

## Additional Reading

Theatrical Design and Production, Gillette  
Drafting for the Theatre, Dorn and Shanda  
The Empty Space, Brook  
Designing and Painting for the Theatre, Pecktal  
Designing and Drawing for the Theatre, Pecktal  
American Set Design, Aronson  
American Set Design 2, Smith  
The Scenic Imagination, Payne  
Anatomy for the Artist, Barcsay  
The Artist's Way, Cameron  
Backwards and Forwards, David Ball