Introduction to Design - Theatre 122

Spring 2008
CRN 28549 - MWF 10:00-10:50 am
David Jilg, Instructor                                      E-mail:  jilg@rhodes.edu
Extension:  3755
Office Hours by Appointment – 130 McCoy Theatre

TEXTS

Wilson, August.  *August Wilson: Three Plays*

Other Texts:
Aristotle, *Poetics* (handout and online at: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.html)
Wilson, E., and A. Goldfarb, “How to Read a Play”, from *Anthology of Living Theatre* (handout)

SUPPLIES NEEDED:  9"x12" Pad Bristol Board
                   Drawing Pencils
                   Architect's Scale Rule (*NOT* Engineer’s Scale Rule!)
                   Selection of Acrylic Paints
                   Selection of Paint Brushes
                   Various model supplies as needed
                   (all available at Art Center on Union Ave.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this course is to explore the creative process and the principles and tools of design as
they apply to theatrical production.  Emphasis will be on script analysis, graphic techniques, and trends in
theatrical design through research, practical exercises and oral and visual presentation of projects.   It serves as a
required course for theatre majors and minors, and as a foundation requirement in artistic expression for non-
theatre majors.

The semester is devoted to brief explorations of the theoretical principles and philosophies that shape the visual
elements of theatre.  Selections from the Gillette text and additional readings contain background information
on basic techniques, both theoretical and practical, used in theatrical design.  Assigned playscripts provide
touchstones for these explorations.  Assigned production viewings allow students to critically evaluate realized
designs.

The course aims to introduce the student to the various design and craft areas of theatrical production.  It is a
foundation for the study of technical theatre at Rhodes, through which students will have the opportunity to
explore more fully the visual aspects of theatre.

An additional objective is to engender a broader understanding of theatre as a visual art and as an integral part
of a liberal arts education, and to foster an appreciation of live theatre which will carry over into their future
lives.

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Only connect.
- E.M. Forster
COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE and GRADING

- You are allowed three absences without penalty, regardless of the reasons for the absences. Each subsequent absence will reduce your final grade by 1/3 of a letter.
- Three instances of tardiness (arriving after attendance has been taken and class has begun) will count as one absence.
- Missing assigned production viewings will count as absences.
- NOTE: absences on days designated for presentations are extremely problematical; making up presentations subtracts from other classroom activities.

If you
- Attend, are prepared and participate in all classes
- Attend all required performances
- Have all projects completed on time

you will be doing satisfactory work for this course.

If you
- Accomplish ALL the above
- Make an honest commitment to challenge yourself
- Exhibit active engagement with the subject matter

you will be doing good work for this course.

As published in the college catalogue:

"In official recording of academic work, the following symbols are employed:
A, excellent; B, good; C, satisfactory; D, passing; ...F, failure...." (p. 76)

COURSEWORK DESCRIPTIONS

Your grade will be based on five components: class participation, quizzes and discussion topics, and three projects assigned during the course of the semester and noted in the syllabus.

Class Participation: Worth up to 20% of your final grade, participation is an essential part of this course. Class discussions, exercises, presentations, general attitude, general involvement, initiative, etc., contribute to the class participation grade.

Quizzes and Discussion Topics: There will be short quizzes on the technical readings and you will supply topics for discussion when critiquing the productions we will be seeing this semester. This component is valued at 20% of your final grade.

Projects: Although projects are weighted equally, expectations and scope increase with each presentation.

First Project: Worth up to 20% of your final grade, the first project will be a design presentation (background/conceptual research, costume sketches, and set floorplan) of one of the three Wilson plays we will be reading as a class: Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Fences, and Joe Turner’s Come and Gone.

Second Project: Worth up to 20% of your final grade, the second project will be a design presentation (background/conceptual research, costume sketches, and painted functional model) of a play of your choice, to be determined in consultation with the instructor.

Final Project: Worth up to 20% of your final grade, the final project will be a design presentation (background/conceptual research, costume sketches, and painted production model) of a contrasting play of your choice, to be determined in consultation with the instructor.

Thus:

Class Participation 20%
Quizzes and Discussion Topics 20%
First Project 20%
Second Project 20%
Final Project 20%
# Introduction to Design
## Theatre 122 Syllabus

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<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
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<th>ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT</th>
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| W   | January 9 | INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION  
Aristotle, *Poetics* (handout)  
**NOTES:**  
• *A Lesson Before Dying,* by Romulus Linney, runs January 11 - February 10 at Circuit Playhouse:  
  Circuit Playhouse  
  1705 Poplar Avenue  
  Memphis, TN 38104  
  (901) 726-4656  
| F   | 11        | PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT and THE DESIGN PROCESS  
Gillette, Ch. 1, “Production Organization and Management”, pp. 1-18  
Gillette, Ch. 2, “The Design Process”, pp. 19-33  
Wilson/Goldfarb, “How to Read a Play” (handout) |
| M   | 14        | ANALYSIS and THE WRITTEN TEXT/1:  
*Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*  
Wilson, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* |
| W   | 16        | ANALYSIS and THE WRITTEN TEXT/2:  
*Fences*  
Wilson, *Fences* |
| F   | 18        | ANALYSIS and THE WRITTEN TEXT/3:  
*Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*  
Assignment of first project plays.  
Wilson, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* |
| M   | 21        | MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY |
| W   | 23        | ANALYSIS and THE WRITTEN TEXT/4  
Conceptual/emotional response to assigned play. |
| F   | 25        | ANALYSIS (The Questioning Process: Preparing for Research) and THE WRITTEN TEXT/5 and REALISM  
Preliminary questions for assigned play.  
Theatrical Realism (handout and power point presentation) |
| M   | 28        | RESEARCH/1:  
Background Research  
Gillette, Ch. 7, “Scenic Design”, pp. 111-134  
Gillette, Ch. 12, “Lighting Design”, pp. 299-305 (partial chapter)  
Gillette, Ch. 16, “Costume Design”, pp. 400-423 |
| W   | 30        | RESEARCH/2:  
Background Research  
Background research for set and costumes. |
| F   | February 1| RESEARCH/3:  
Conceptual Research  
Conceptual research for set and costumes.  
*(Relate to conceptual/emotional response above.)* |
| M   | 4         | RESEARCH PRESENTATION QUESTIONS and PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION of Second Project |
**W 6**  
**RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS/1:** *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Fences, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*  
Background and conceptual research presentations.

**F 8**  
**RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS/2:** *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Fences, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*  
Background and conceptual research presentations.

**M 11**  
**CRITIQUING DESIGN:** Discussion of *A Lesson Before Dying*  
Bring in discussion topics.

**W 13**  
**PRACTICAL MATTERS**  
Gillette, Ch. 3, “A Brief History of Theatre Architecture and Stage Technology”, pp. 34-48  
Gillette, Ch. 4, “The Stage and Its Equipment”, pp. 49-72

**F 15**  
**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: DEPARTURES FROM REALISM**  
Review theatrical realism handout.  
*How would you reinterpret designs for your assigned play?*

**NOTES:**  
- *How I Learned to Drive*, by Paula Vogel, runs February 15-16 and February 21-24 at the McCoy Theatre, Rhodes College.

**M 18**  
**VISUAL PRESENTATION OF DESIGNS and DRAWING/1**  
Gillette, review Ch. 16, “Costume Design”, pp. 416-423 (partial chapter)  
Gillette, Ch. 22, “Drawing and Rendering”, pp. 560-575  
**Bring drawing materials to class.**

**W 20**  
**VISUAL PRESENTATION OF DESIGNS and MECHANICAL DRAFTING/1**  
Gillette, review Ch. 7, “Scenic Design”, pp. 120-134 (partial chapter)  
Gillette, Ch. 20, “Mechanical Drafting”, pp. 512-534  
**Bring drawing materials to class.**

**F 22**  
**WORK DAY/FIRST PROJECT**

**M 25**  
**CRITIQUING DESIGN:** Discussion of *How I Learned to Drive*  
and DISCUSSION OF SECOND PROJECT  
Bring in discussion topics.

**W 27**  
**FIRST PROJECT PRESENTATIONS/1 - Costumes**  
Thumbnail costume sketches and selected research.

**F 29**  
**FIRST PROJECT PRESENTATIONS/2 - Sets**  
Set floor plan, elevations and selected research.

**M-F March 3-7**  
**SPRING RECESS**

**M 10**  
**SECOND PROJECT**  
Conceptual/emotional response to chosen play.

**W 12**  
**STYLE, COMPOSITION, AND DESIGN and COLOR/1**  
Gillette, Ch. 5, “Style, Composition, and Design”, pp. 73-85  
Gillette, Ch. 6, “Color”, pp. 86-110  
**Bring painting materials to class.**

**NOTES:**  
- *The Night of the Iguana*, by Tennessee Williams, runs March 14-30 at Theatre Memphis:  
  Theatre Memphis  
  630 Perkins Extended  
  Memphis, TN  38117  
  (901) 682-8323  
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|     |      | Presentations  
|     |      | Painted costume sketches and set elevations from Wilson plays. |
| W   | 19   | SET MODELS/1  
|     |      | Gillette, review Ch. 7, “Scenic Design”, pp. 122-125 (partial chapter/“Models”)  
|     |      | Developmental models using Wilson plays set materials. |
| F   | 21   | EASTER RECESS |
| M   | 24   | DISCUSSION OF FINAL PROJECT and WORK DAY/SECOND PROJECT |
| W   | 26   | WORK DAY/SECOND PROJECT |
| F   | 28   | WORK DAY/SECOND PROJECT |
| M   | 31   | WORK DAY/SECOND PROJECT |
| W   | April 2 | SECOND PROJECT PRESENTATIONS/1  
|     |      | Painted costume sketches, set floor plan and developmental model, select background and conceptual research. |
|     |      | **NOTES:**  
|     |      | • *Lysistrata*, an adaptation from Aristophanes by Kyle Hatley, runs April 4-5 and April 10-13 at the McCoy Theatre, Rhodes College. |
| F   | 4    | SECOND PROJECT PRESENTATIONS/2  
|     |      | Painted costume sketches, set floor plan and developmental model, select background and conceptual research. |
| M   | 7    | FINAL PROJECT  
|     |      | Conceptual/emotional response to chosen play. |
| W   | 9    | SET MODELS/2  
|     |      | Model building techniques. |
| F   | 11   | CRITIQUING DESIGN: Discussion of *Lysistrata*  
|     |      | Bring in discussion topics. |
| M   | 14   | WORK DAY/FINAL PROJECT |
| W   | 16   | WORK DAY/FINAL PROJECT |
| F   | 18   | WORK DAY/FINAL PROJECT |
| M   | 21   | WORK DAY/FINAL PROJECT |
| W   | 23   | WORK DAY/FINAL PROJECT |
| F   | 25   | AWARDS CONVOCATION/URCAS – NO CLASS |
| W   | April 30 | **FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**  
|     |      | 1:00-3:30 PM  
|     |      | Painted costume sketches, painted set model, and selected background and conceptual research. |