

Explorations in Scenic Design

Fall 2012

Anne Mundell, Instructor

Course Information

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Office Hours

by appointment or stop by

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will have:

- improved your overall design skills
 - in idea building
 - in storytelling
 - in dealing with a theatrical environment in four dimensions
 - in the craft areas such as model building and storyboarding
- have some projects you can include in your portfolio
- have made new inroads into your creative process and collaborations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

You are now going to embark on an intensive study of Scenic Design. We will spend an exciting semester in an exploration of the process as well as an examination of the nature of creativity. We will also utilize some of the skills that a Scene Designer needs, such as drawing, model making, storyboarding general collaborative skills. You will be expected to deal with in-depth research, scriptural examinations, careful arrangements of space, composition and ground plan, conceptual structure, real life obstacles and the elements of a successful final project. One of the major components of the class will be learning to work in the fourth dimension: not simply creating a picture appropriate for the script, but creating a universe that moves through time in support of your production. Communication and development of your ideas will also be central topics.

COURSEWORK

Although work in this course will be difficult and time-consuming, the projects are designed to be intellectually and creatively stimulating. Time management is a must. Expect a difficult but rewarding semester.

Explorations in Scenic Design is mostly about visual storytelling, establishing creative pathways, learning to explore your own imagination and establishing a repertoire of studio and collaborative skills. You will learn to work quickly and investigate ways to draw upon creative resources. Ideas are central to each project with the secondary goal being to solidify your skills in service of your ideas.

PROJECTS

- **Part of Speech Project**
- *The Glass Menagerie*
- **TV Workshop**

READINGS AND COURSE MATERIALS

You will need to buy art supplies as needed through the semester. I will suggest many materials, but I also recommend that you explore your own ideas about the best supplies with which to investigate and represent ideas visually.

Required reading:

The play that you are required to pick up at the bookstore is as follows:

- *The Glass Menagerie*-Tennessee Williams

CLASSES

Classes will be in seminar form or studio form with an occasional short lecture. We will discuss the readings during the classes noted in the syllabus, so you need to have read them. You **MUST** be in class to discuss your projects and to attend the skills sessions. The class time is imperative to give you perspective from your classmates and myself on the progress of your projects. It is important to see your work in progress; even at this stage in your academic careers, process is still more important than product. We will have “Pizza Party” studio sessions from 4:30 to 6:00 on the Fridays noted on your course calendar.

STUDENT EVALUATION AND ATTENDANCE

You will have three projects this semester, with the grade breakdown as follows:

- **Part of Speech Project-35%**
- *Glass Menagerie*-35%
- **TV Workshop-20%**
- **Participation-10%**

Each project will be evaluated based on the matrixes available to you on the class website: [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/amundell/Scene Design One/](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/amundell/Scene_Design_One/)

PROJECTS NOT HANDED IN ON TIME WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. On the due date, you will hand in what you have finished and be graded on that. You may, however, continue working on the project and be RE-graded on the amendments. If you are

designing a set for a show on the CMU production calendar, you may exchange a portion of one of your “paper projects” for your realized design, **ONLY** CMU Drama School projects will be included. How much and what will be determined on a case by case basis. You must arrange this with me **IN ADVANCE**.

THERE WILL BE NO INCOMPLETES IN EXPOSITIONS IN SCENIC DESIGN. ALL work will be due on the last day of classes.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The School of Drama believes that discipline is a core standard of professionalism. Students are expected to maintain a professional attitude at all times. It is understood that this includes: the prohibition of cell phones, instant messaging or anything else on a laptop screen that might be disruptive to the instructor or classmates, prompt arrival to class and fully prepared for the day’s work (i.e. readings and homework completed.)

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

The School of Drama has the following expectations of students while in class:

- Students are responsible for absolute punctuality at every class.
- Students being disrespectful to the instructor, fellow students or the classroom space and equipment will not be tolerated. This includes class disruption due to cell phones that have not been silenced, or laptop screens that could be disruptive to anyone in the class. No smoking is permitted in the classroom or the building.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the theatre spaces at all; however they may be permitted in other classrooms at the discretion of the instructor. If food and/or drink are allowed, clean up is mandatory. Students are responsible for cleaning at the end of each session.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON RECORDING OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

No student may record or tape any classroom activity without the express written consent of the professor. If a student believes that he/she is disabled and needs to record or tape classroom activities, he/she should contact the Office of Disability Resources to request an appropriate accommodation.

ATTENDANCE:

- Attendance and punctuality for all classes is mandatory.
- Attendance is understood to be an individual’s presence and full participation for the entire time period assigned to the session.
- Punctuality is understood to mean an individual is present at the time attendance is taken and prepared to participate in class activities.
 - Anyone entering class after attendance is taken is considered late.
 - Anyone entering class 20 minutes after attendance is taken is considered absent.
 - 3 “late” arrivals will equal 1 absence in this course. See absence policy below.

- The grade for any student who has unexcused absences (including absences due to tardiness) for more than 2 classes over the semester will drop by 5% for each successive absence. For example a student with an 89% for the course would receive an 84% with 3 unexcused absences, a 79% for 4 unexcused absences, etc.
- All students are responsible for the work produced in each class period, regardless of their presence there.
- An excused absence is one that can be documented by a note from health services, or is associated with an unexpected family crisis; all others are considered unexcused.
- While serious illness or injury may excuse a student from a session, excessive absence or lateness will call attention to the students' ability to keep pace with the training. If, in the opinion of a faculty member or members, a student has recorded excessive absences, the faculty and staff of the student's option reserve the right to determine future participation in the program.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Class participation is assessed with the following rubric:

For each class meeting the student will be assigned a score from 0-4

0= not in class

1= In class but asleep or using a mobile device or laptop when not instructed

2= In class but silent and/or ill-prepared

3= In class and making contributions to discussion and asking questions

4= In class and highly engaged, making quality contributions to discussion

and asking questions that propel the discussion further

GRADING SCALE:

In accordance with the standards of the Carnegie Mellon School Of Drama, letter grades are defined as follows:

- **A+** (100-99%) Excellent and flawless work that exhibits a deep understanding of the material and mastery of the required skills, creative and aesthetically extraordinary, and/or memorable and outstanding work.
- **A** (98-94%) Excellent, flawless with a high degree of creativity, aesthetic depth and mastery of skills.
- **A-** (93-92%) Excellent work with minor flaws in technical execution or aesthetic approach.
- **B+** (91-90%) Very Good. Creative, skilled work with minor flaws in execution technically, conceptually and/or aesthetically.
- **B** (89-85%) Good. Solid, competent work with some flaws in technical execution, conceptualization and/or aesthetics. Possibly missing a minor element of the assignment due to not following all directions.
- **B-** (84-83%) Good. Competent work with some flaws in technical execution, conceptualization and or/aesthetics. Probably missing a minor element of the assignment or not completely following directions accounts for some of the flaws.

- **C+** (82-81%) Satisfactory work but with significant technical, conceptual and/or aesthetic problems
- **C** (80-76%) Average work with significant technical, conceptual and aesthetic problems. Missing components of the assignment.
- **C-** (75-74%) Barely acceptable work. Significant problems with execution and/or missing major components of the assignment.
- **D** (73-65%) Not acceptable work. Missing large components of the assignment. Student did not follow directions. Major technical, conceptual and aesthetic problems.
- **R** (64%>) Fails to meet the barest of requirements technically, conceptually, and aesthetically.

The following are areas of competency the School of Drama evaluates on a school wide basis: artistic and professional aptitude and potential, skill mastery, professional conduct and engagement, innovation and positive collaboration.

In this class you will be graded on your participation in classroom discussions, your conduct in the classroom, and the grades given on the various projects.