

THAR 130: Introduction to Theatre Design:

Sets, Lights Costumes

Instructor: Eric Baratta

Wednesday 3:30-6:30pm

Course Location: Collaborative Classroom, Van Pelt Library

Course questions: eab@sas.upenn.edu

This course is open to all university students and no previous theater experience is necessary.

Design for theatre (and all of the performing arts) is a dynamic, collaborative process that engages both intellect and emotion in staging the dramatic moment. The personal vision of the designer must navigate the often-uncharted waters of the production process, from the earliest, personal moments of design inspiration to the opening night performance. Design flows from creativity, is structured by research and theory, and is realized in living form by collaboration in the dynamic process of theatre-making.

This class will integrate history, theory and practice of stage design in the interactive setting of the Collaborative Classroom in Van Pelt Library in this special interdisciplinary, active-learning course offering open to all Penn students. Group and individual projects, field visits, practical projects and guest speakers will be featured in this newly-revised course open to all Penn students.



The Marriage of Bette & Boo,
Technical rehearsal.
Theatre Arts Program

Course Goals:

The goals of this course include student growth in four primary areas:

1. The first area is that of theatre artist, where, during the course of the semester's work, students are expected to show positive growth in his or her ability to describe and visually represent design ideas, exhibit an intellectual willingness for design exploration, and show growth in the sophistication of his or her overall design approach.
2. The second area will focus on developing the analytical ability of the student to see, understand and critically respond to the design methodologies of productions that they will be required to attend during the course of the semester. Productions will include the Theatre Arts production (s), and professional productions located within the city of Philadelphia.
3. The third area involves the ability for research and analysis of design history and dramatic text. Students will critically respond to a variety of short readings during the course of the semester.
4. The fourth area is that of theater technician/artist. Class sessions will expose students to various aspects of stage lighting and scenic production.

Course Format:

This course will meet once a week and will include lecture/slideshows, group discussions, project reviews and discussions, student presentations, visits to local professional theaters in Philadelphia and guest artist lectures. Students will be asked to bring laptop computers if available as well as participate in practical workshops which might require dressing in 'work clothes.'

Required Materials & Equipment for this course:

1. Access to a digital camera/camera phone for the duration of the semester.
2. Two texts to be made available for purchase at The Penn Book Center/34th & Sansom Sts or on the online canvas website.
 1. Sketchup for Dummies*
 2. A playscript to be announced at the first meeting of the class.
3. An architect's scale rule (available at the Penn Bookstore/any art store/Office Max, etc.)
4. 9"x12" sketch pad (available at the Penn Bookstore/any art store/Office Max, etc.)
5. Mechanical Pencil (available at the Penn Bookstore/any art store/Office Max, etc.)
6. Access to a laptop computer or a campus workstation that you can use Google SketchUp to complete projects. There are computers in Van Pelt Library that have this application—you'll have to investigate which ones work best with your personal schedule. If you own a computer and have internet access, you can download the free software here: <http://sketchup.google.com/download/>
7. Theater Tickets--to be named during the first week of class. All assigned productions will have student discount rates.
- *8. Recommended, not required: Google SketchUp for Dummies. Chopra, Aidan. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, Inc. 1997. Various editions available new or used.

Typical projects included in this course:

Critical reviews of local professional productions.
Design development projects, basic photography, digital modeling learned in class.
Practical projects involving technical theatre practice/design.
Sketching, collage work, and other media as explored in the class.

No experience in design media is assumed of students entering the course, but it is certainly welcome.



Collaborative Classroom, Van Pelt Library



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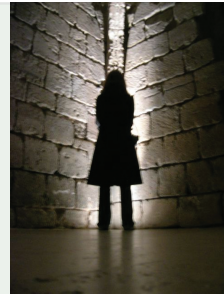
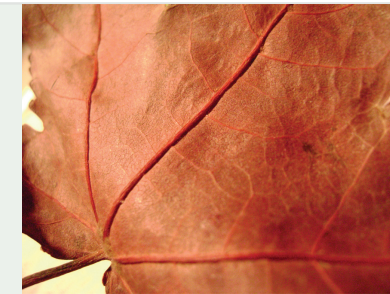
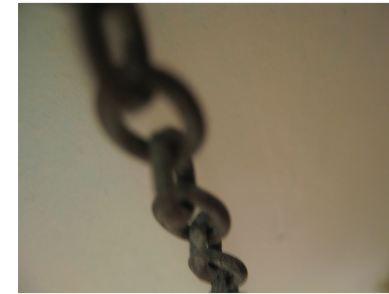
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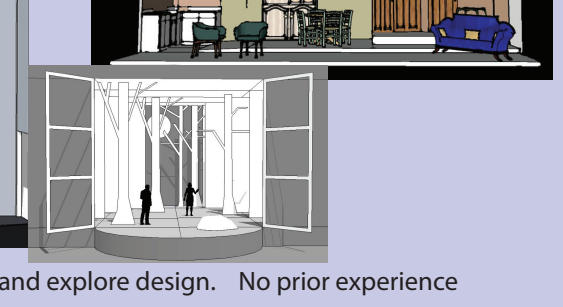
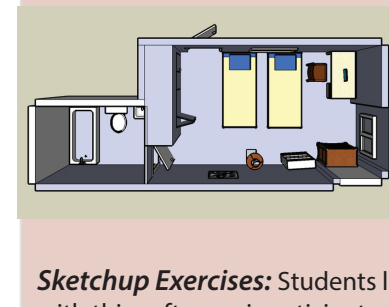
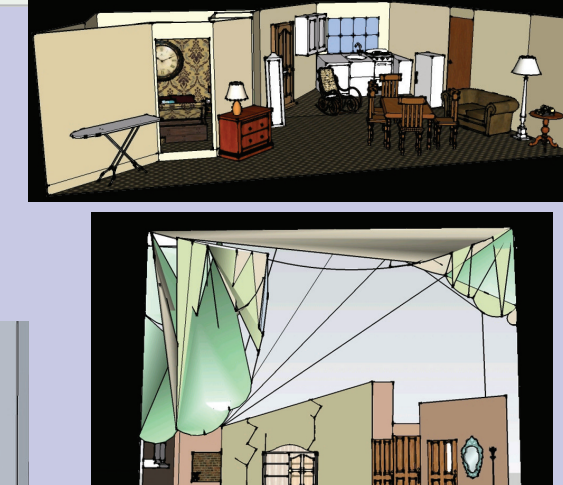
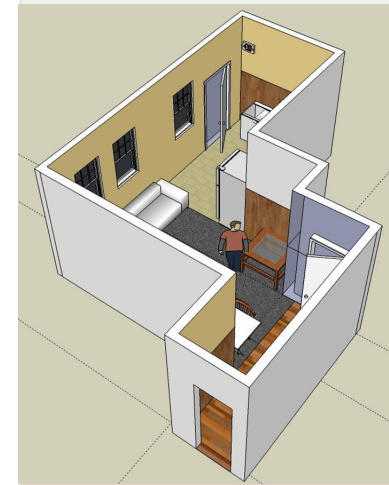
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Sample Student Projects from previous years.

There is usually a mix of theater/non-theater and designer/non-designer students in this course. The work on this page represents a mix of freshmen through senior class students and majors including Nursing, Communications, Cinema Studies, Engineering, English, Fine Arts and Theatre Arts.



Elements of Design Projects: Students are required to look in the real world and photograph design concepts discussed in class. Photography skills often help, but what is required is understanding of the material and willingness to explore the physical world.



Sketchup Exercises: Students learn free software to create scaled, 3-D model spaces and explore design. No prior experience with this software is anticipated.