

THR 415 – SCENE PAINTING  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
SPRING 2009  
TTH 9:10 – 12:00  
CLASSES HELD IN: SCENE SHOP

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### DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

Techniques in scene painting for drops, scenery units and floor treatment for a variety of theatrical spaces.

### GOALS:

In this course you will be introduced to the basics of scenic painting, which includes...

- 1) The premises on which the form is based
- 2) The basic techniques and procedures
- 3) A familiarity with the tools and materials

Scenic painting is often really “scenic drawing” which, more often than not, is done with a brush rather than with a pen or pencil. Scenic painting has evolved through a number of centuries as the technique of creating visual illusion for the stage through painted surfaces. These are some of the most basic characteristics:

- Scene Painting is **specific**: The scenic artist is interpreting the set designer’s design to create a specified image, be it abstract or figurative. Frequently the goal is to establish a visual illusion.
- Scene Painting is **methodical**: In going about the process of Scene Painting the key word is strategy. All “scenics” employ a plan in accomplishing each and every painting job.
- Scene Painting is **economical**: In applying strategy, the scenic artist paints concisely, using techniques that achieve the desired effect in a minimum of time and effort and within the constraints of time and budget.

In the end, this course is about training the eye and hand to capture the visual essence of particular surfaces and objects that form the human environment. The scenic artist is continually trying to figure out how the visual world works, and applies that knowledge in the context of theatrical performance. While originally developed for the stage, scenic painting has applications in interior decoration and in other performance media such as film, video, and television.

### PAINTING PROJECTS:

- Lining Exercise/Scumble
- Wood Panel/Parquet
- Monochromatic Project
- Marble Inlay with Lettered Name (Yours)
- Stone/Brick with Foliage
- Mini-drop/Final Project... selected individually with approval of instructor

### ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- Research Morgue
- Lab Service – working on Departmental Productions

### CLASS ATTENDANCE:

- Attendance is **Mandatory**. Being present and receptive to the information, discussions, and critique sessions presented in class sessions is essential to the successful completion of the course. More than three (3) unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your semester's grade by .25 of a grade point. *Each additional unexcused absence beyond three will lower your semester grade by .10 of a grade point.*
- Late arrivals will be noted and every three (3) late markings will equal one absence.
- Attendance will be taken at each session.
- Please be courteous to your instructor and fellow students by arriving on time.

### CLASS POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS:

- Class begins promptly at 9:10. Note: near the end of class, be sure to leave time for cleanup.
- TIME for working on projects is calculated into the class schedule, designated as "supervised practice." For the most part the last hour of each class will be dedicated for project work. Remember: Drying time is as important to scenic painting as actual painting time. If you need more time, come in during OPEN shop hours (times are posted at scene shop entrance.)
- LAB SERVICE requirement: 24 hours (completed by the end of the semester) working on MSU Theatre productions.

The designer or charge scenic for each show will notify you of specific paint calls for the week. Since Scene Painting can only happen once scenery is built – these hours will be in constant flux.

To get proper attendance credit, you must sign in and out with either...

- Erin Freeman or Paul Deckard (for *Snapshot*)
- Justin Miller or Elizabeth Goble (for *Hedda Gabler*)
- Kirk Domer or Justin Miller (for *Tommy*)
- A Graduate Teaching Assistant or an Undergraduate Student Employee
- Brian Adams (Technical Director) or Jonathan Little (Scene Shop Supervisor)

*\*Regard this service as practical experience supplementary to instruction in this course.*

- RESEARCH REFERENCE FILE (Morgue): Developing an important pictorial resource – your own collection of reference images taken from photos, magazines, paint brochures, color charts, library research, postcards, etc. These images are intended to serve as guides to help you to "see" more intensively and to deal better with various specific visual surfaces like wood, marble, stone, etc. The file will also serve as a source for you final project.
- The course will include a final SUMMARY SESSION, in lieu of an exam. At that time all assigned projects will be reviewed and critiqued on the basis of:
  - completion
  - proper scene painting procedure
  - application of technique
  - visual quality
  - interpretation

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	1/13	Introduction; Discussion of Syllabus and Course Expectations	
	1/15	Color Theory and Basic Painting Techniques; Flat Preparation	
2	1/20	Intro to Lining/Scumble Project Lining/Scumble Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Lining/Scumble Projects DUE 1/22 Wood Research for 1/27
	1/22	Lining/Scumble Project Studio <b>DUE: Lining Project/Scumble</b> Intro to Wood Project	<b>Reminder:</b> Wood Research for 1/27
3	1/27	<b>Discuss Wood Research</b> Wood Project Studio	<b>Go See:</b> <i>Snapshot</i>
	1/29	Wood Project Studio	
4	2/3	Wood Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Wood Projects DUE 2/10 Monochromatic Research for 2/10
	2/5	Wood Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Monochromatic Research for 2/10
5	2/10	<b>DUE: Wood Critique</b> <b>Discuss Monochromatic Research</b> Intro to Monochromatic Parquet	
	2/12	Monochromatic Project Studio	
6	2/17	Monochromatic Project Studio	
	2/19	Monochromatic Project Studio	<b>Go See:</b> <i>Hedda Gabler</i>
7	2/24	Monochromatic Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Monochromatic Projects DUE 2/26 Marble Research for 3/3
	2/26	<b>DUE: Monochromatic Critique</b> Intro to Marble Basic	<b>Reminder:</b> Marble Research for 3/3
8	3/3	<b>Discuss Marble Research</b> Marble Project Studio	
	3/5	Intro to Marble Inlay Marble Project Studio	
9	3/17	Marble Project Studio	
	3/19	<b>No Class: Open Project Studio</b>	<b>Kirk &amp; Gwen at USITT</b>
10	3/24	Marble Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Marble Projects DUE 3/26 Brick/Stone & Foliage Project Research for 3/31
	3/26	<b>DUE: Marble Critique</b> Intro to Brick/Stone	<b>Reminder:</b> Brick/Stone & Foliage Project Research for 3/31 Final Project Research for 4/2
11	3/31	<b>Discuss Brick/Stone &amp; Foliage Research</b> Brick/Stone Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Final Project Research for 4/2
	4/2	<b>Final Project Subject Approved</b> Intro to Foliage Brick/Stone Project Studio	
12	4/7	Brick/Stone Project Studio	
	4/9	Brick/Stone Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Brick/Stone Projects DUE 4/14 <b>Go See:</b> <i>The Who's Tommy</i>

<b>13</b>	4/14	<b>DUE: Brick/Stone Critique</b>	
	4/16	Final Project Studio	
<b>14</b>	4/21	Final Project Studio	
	4/23	Final Project Studio	
<b>15</b>	4/28	Final Project Studio	<b>Reminder:</b> Final Projects & Summary Session DUE 4/30 <b>Go See:</b> <i>Far Away &amp; This is a Chair</i>
	4/30	<b>DUE: Final Project Critique</b> Summary Session Course Evaluations	<b>*** Remember to bring in ALL of your scene painting projects for the Summary Session.</b>

**EXAM:** Wednesday, May 6: 7:45-9:45 a.m.

**LAB & EQUIPMENT FEE:** (\$110.00 – Make check payable to: MSU Department of Theatre)

INCLUDES...

- ¼”, ½” & 1” Fitch Scenic Paint Brushes (¼” - \$6.00, ½” - \$7.00, 1” - \$15.00)
- 3’ x 6’ Flat Frame with (5) muslin coverings (\$3.30 per yard)
- Scenic Paints (averages \$34.00-\$71.00 per gallon)
- Bamboo Brush Extenders (averages \$7.00-\$10.00 per stick)
- Lining Sticks (Shop Stock)

**ADDITIONAL TOOLS:**

- Bristle ‘flat’ brushes: Oil painting type or lettering type ¼” & smaller... these are white bristle, and suggested for the lettering project.
- Brush and Equipment Carrier
- Tape Measure
- Pencil & Eraser
- Charcoal sticks, thin vine (3-6) – SOFT
- Cotton cord for snap line or metal snap line device – DO NOT PUT **CHALK IN!**
- Masking tape – 1 roll ¾” and/or Rubber Bands
- Pounce Wheel (found as sewing/fabric supply stores)
- Flogger – You will learn to make one in class

**Note:** for identification, LABEL all you brushes with colored tape or spray on the handles.

**BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE:**

- GRADING is based on completion of projects, class attendance record, lab service, and how well you demonstrate painting skills learned in class. It’s not simply the result. It’s also the specific process by which you attain the result and how well you handle the brush and respond to instruction. Each assignment grade is evaluated on four criteria: “application of course materials”, “quality of work”, “completion of work”, and “overall portfolio of work.” Feel free to inquire about your grade standing at anytime.
- Late work will devalue your assignment grade by 25% if one class period late and an additional 25% for each additional class.
- Academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of 0.0.

## % BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE:

*Lining Exercise/Scumble* – 5%  
*Wood Panel/Parquet* – 15%  
*Monochromatic Project* – 15%  
*Marble Inlay with Lettered Name* – 15%

*Stone/Brick with Foliage* – 15%  
*Mini-drop/Final Project* – 20%  
*Research Morgue* – 5%  
*Lab Service* – 10%

## GRADING SCALE:

- |            |   |     |           |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|-----------|---|-----|
| • 93%-100% | = | 4.0 | • 73%-77% | = | 2.0 |
| • 88%-92%  | = | 3.5 | • 68%-72% | = | 1.5 |
| • 83%-87%  | = | 3.0 | • 60%-67% | = | 1.0 |
| • 78%-82%  | = | 2.5 | • 0%-59%  | = | 0.0 |

## SOME IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE DATES (DOUBLE CHECK TIMES!!!):

<i>Snapshot</i>	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	<i>The Who's Tommy</i>	<i>Far Away/Chair</i>
Jan. 28-Feb. 8, 2009	February 20-28, 2009	April 9-19, 2009	April 28-May 3, 2009
Arena Theatre	Pasant Theatre	Fairchild Theatre	RCAH AUD

## UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

1. Academic Honesty: Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, **The Department of Theatre** adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).)  
Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in **THR 415**. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)
2. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY).
3. Drops and Adds: The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is **2/6/09**. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is **3/4/09**. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.
4. Observing Major Religious Holidays: You may make up course work missed to observe a major religious holiday only if you make arrangements in advance with the instructor.
5. Commercialized Lecture Notes: Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.
6. Attendance: Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.
7. Internet: Some professional journals will not consider a submission for publication if the article has appeared on the Internet. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not want your course papers posted to the course Web site.
8. Disruptive Behavior: Article 2.3.5 of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.3.10 of the AFR states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Faculty Judiciary process.