

INTRO TO SCENE DESIGN THR 214 - COURSE SYLLABUS  
FALL 2010  
TTH 10:20 – 12:10  
CLASSES HELD IN: RM. 235

G. Max Maxin (TA)  
2 Auditorium  
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OFFICE HRS: M 11:00a.m.-12:00 p.m.

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OFFICE HRS: Tu 1:00-2:00 p.m.  
F 1:00-2:00 p.m.

### DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

Design and technical aspects regarding the design process and production of stage scenery.

### GOALS:

In this course you will be introduced to several aspects of scene design (collage, rendering, drafting, paint elevating, model building, etc.), so that you will have a greater pool of resources from which to build your scenic environments.

*Simultaneously*, you will be asked to apply these tools to the creation and implementation of designs that communicate production intent within the context of *your* own individual point of view.

### REQUIREMENTS:

You will be required to complete **five** scene design related projects in this class, each of which includes specific design considerations to be specified below.

Each phase of a project's process will be discussed and critiqued in class – in fact will on most days *be* the class content. Your participation in these discussions is *very* important, and will be part of each project grade. In other words, **your attendance and participation is required at all class sessions**. Portions of each project are due prior to the completion date. You will find it easy to complete these projects *if* you keep up with the weekly schedule of project progress. At certain project phases you will be asked to give a formal presentation of your work.

### PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

Part of this course is devoted to offering information and ideas about design theory. The main goal is to raise visual consciousness and to develop an understanding of the design process through study and practice. Also required are two one-page reports on live performances attended during the semester (hopefully one should be a professional production) DUE by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Scene Design 214 Course Packet (Available at Ned's Bookstore)
- Roznowski, Rob and Kirk Domer, Collaboration in Theatre
- Nachtrieb, Peter Sinn, *boom*
- Sophocles, Translated by Don Taylor, *Antigone*

### ANGEL:

- Course information is housed on ANGEL. If you are absent, you are responsible for checking ANGEL for missed information. Do not ask the instructor for lost or missed handouts and information.
- If you have technical difficulties please contact the ANGEL helpline at (517) 355-2345 as soon as the problems arise. <https://angel.msu.edu/help/Help.asp>

### 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 two (2) 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 .25 of a grade point.*
- University sanctioned activities and religious holidays are understood with appropriate documentation prior to the event. If documentation concerning an absence due to an unforeseen life circumstance is provided, I will take it into consideration. However, I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Attendance will be taken at each session.
- Late arrivals will be noted and every three (3) late markings will equal one absence.
- Please be courteous to your instructor and fellow students by arriving on time.

### DOT CLASS/REHEARSAL/PERFORMANCE POLICY

- Our primary focus is your education. Classes should take precedence over production. To ensure that this focus remain balanced we have instituted a "no class attendance means no rehearsal policy" for all BFA and MFA actors and Stage Managers.
- Every course has different attendance guidelines. This policy is related to the number of allowed absences in any THR or DAN class. If you exceed the number of allowed absences for any individual class, the Director of the production that you are involved with will be notified regarding the break of policy and you will not be permitted to participate in that evening's rehearsal or performance. Please check the attendance policy carefully on all THR and DAN syllabi.
- As an example, most acting classes allow two unexcused absences. You may use these at any time and it will not affect your attendance at rehearsal or performance. If you miss class again and have exceeded your limit of allowed absences, you will not be allowed to attend that evening's rehearsal or performance. This is related to all THR and DAN classes.

### PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:

**\*\*\*Please note: All of the following FINAL projects must be submitted "virtually" on ANGEL**

#### "Song Interpretation" Project

- "Interpretative" Model

#### "Literary Excerpt" Project

- Collage OR "Interpretative" Model

#### Design Rendering Reproduction Project

- Rendering Reproduction to be Approved by Instructor

#### *boom*

- Script Analysis
- Concept Statement and Premise
- Research Board
- Rough ¼" Groundplan
- ¼" White Model
- Color/Texture Chart

#### *Antigone*

- Script Analysis
- Concept Statement (contrived from Director's Premise)
- Research Board
- ¼" Groundplan
- ¼" Color Model (constructed from Paint Elevations)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

Wk	Day	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment	Assignment
1	1	9/2	Introduction; Discussion of Syllabus and Course Expectations	Read “A Brief History of Theatrical Scenery” and “Art in the Theatre” (CP) for 9/7	Read Syllabus and Course Packet Contents Page for 9/2
2	2	9/7	History and Theory of Scene Design and Scene Designers	Read “What is Scenography” and “The Theatre Experience” (CP) for 9/9	Read/Watch “ <i>Song</i> ” (ANGEL) for 9/9
	3	9/9	Discuss Reading; Discuss Examples of Set Design, Types & Styles; Announce “ <i>Song Interpretation</i> ” Project	Read “The Purpose Behind Theatrical Research” and “To a Young Stage Designer” (CP) for 9/14	
3	4	9/14	Discuss Reading; Research Methods	Read “ <i>Literary Excerpt</i> ” (ANGEL) for 9/16	“ <i>Song Interpretation</i> ” Project Due 9/16
	5	9/16	<b>DUE:</b> “ <i>Song Interpretation</i> ” Project; Announce “ <i>Literary Excerpt</i> ” Project	Read <u>Collaboration in Theatre</u> Pt. I for 9/21	
4	6	9/21	Discuss Reading; Collage Techniques	Read “World of the Play and Script Analysis” (CP) for 9/23	<b>Go See:</b> <i>The American Clock</i>
	7	9/23	Script Analysis; Emotional Response		<b>Reminder:</b> “ <i>Literary Excerpt</i> ” Project Due 9/28
5	8	9/28	<b>DUE:</b> “ <i>Literary Excerpt</i> ” Project	Read <i>boom</i> for 9/30	<i>boom</i> Script Analysis Due 9/30
	9	9/30	Discuss <i>boom</i> and Announce Project; <b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Script Analysis		<i>boom</i> Concept Statement, Premise and Preliminary Research Due 10/5; <b>Reminder:</b> Bring Drawing Supplies for 10/5
6	10	10/5	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Concept Statement, Premise and Preliminary Research; Sketching Techniques		<i>boom</i> Research Board Due 10/7
	11	10/7	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Research Board; Mixed Media Creation: Rendering to Music		<i>boom</i> Thumbnails Due 10/12; <b>Reminder:</b> Bring Drawing Supplies for 10/12
7	12	10/12	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Thumbnails; Announce Design Rendering Reproduction Project (In-Class work)	Read “Scene Design Drawings” and “Lettering” (CP) for 10/14	<b>Reminder:</b> Bring Drafting Supplies for 10/14
	13	10/14	Discuss Reading; Intro to Drafting Standards	Read “USITT Scenic Design and Technical Production Graphic Standard” (CP) for 10/19	<i>boom</i> Thumbnail Updates Due 10/19; <b>Reminder:</b> Bring Drafting Supplies for 10/19 <b>Go See:</b> <i>Evil Dead: The Musical</i>
8	14	10/19	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Thumbnail Updates; Discuss Reading; Drafting: Groundplans & Elevations	Read “The Set Design Process” & “Model House Specifications” (CP) for 10/21	Design Rendering Reproduction Due 10/21; <b>Reminder:</b> Bring Drafting and Model Building Supplies for 10/21

8	15	10/21	<b>DUE:</b> Design Rendering Reproduction Discuss Reading; Drafting Q&A; Model Building Demo		Model Shell Due 10/26; <b>Reminder:</b> Bring Model Building Supplies for 10/26
9	16	10/26	<b>DUE:</b> Model Shells; Model Building Demo		<i>boom</i> Rough Groundplan for 10/28; <b>Reminder:</b> Bring Model Building Supplies for 10/28
	17	10/28	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Rough Groundplan; Model Building Demo (Challenges)		<i>boom</i> Process Presentations Due 11/4 <b>Go See:</b> <i>Haunted AUD</i>
10	18	11/2	<b>Stratford Master Class</b>	<b>Stratford Master Class</b>	
	19	11/4	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Process Presentations; In-Class Work Day	<b>Open Work Session with Max</b> – <b>Room 235 6:00p.m. on</b> <b>11/4.</b>	<b>Reminder:</b> <i>boom</i> (Round I) Due 11/9
11	20	11/9	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Critique (Round I)		<b>Reminder:</b> <i>boom</i> (Round II) Due 11/11
	21	11/11	<b>DUE:</b> <i>boom</i> Critique (Round II)	Read <i>Antigone</i> for 11/16	
12	22	11/16	Discuss <i>Antigone</i> and Announce Project; Collaboration vs. Cooperation	Read <u>Collaboration in Theatre</u> Pt. II for 11/18	<i>Antigone</i> Script Analysis Due 11/18; <b>Go See:</b> <i>As You Like It</i>
	23	11/18	<b>DUE:</b> <i>Antigone</i> Script Analysis; Discuss Reading; Director Presentation: Max		<i>Antigone</i> Concept Statement, Preliminary Research and Thumbnails Due 11/23
13	24	11/23	<b>DUE:</b> <i>Antigone</i> Concept Statement, Preliminary Research and Thumbnails		<i>Antigone</i> Updated Research Board, Thumbnails and Rough Groundplan Due 11/30 <b>Reminder:</b> Performance Reports Due 11/30
	25	11/25	<b>THANKSGIVING NO CLASS</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING NO CLASS</b>	<b>Reminder:</b> Have a Good Thanksgiving!
14	26	11/30	<b>DUE:</b> <i>Antigone</i> Updated Research Board, Thumbnails and Rough Groundplan; Paint Elevations		<b>FINAL DEADLINE for Performance Reports DUE by 11/30!!!</b>
	27	12/2	<b>TBA</b>		<i>Antigone</i> – Process Presentation (Round I) Due 12/7
15	28	12/7	<b>DUE:</b> <i>Antigone</i> – Process Presentation (Round I)		<i>Antigone</i> – Process Presentation (Round II) Due 12/9
	29	12/9	<b>DUE:</b> <i>Antigone</i> – Process Presentation (Round II); Course Evaluations		<b>Reminder:</b> <i>Antigone</i> Due 12/14 <b>Go See:</b> <i>Freshman Showcase</i>

**EXAM:** Tuesday, December 14: 10:00-12:00 noon

### PREP FOR DESIGN PRESENTATIONS AND CRITIQUE:

- At the start of the class session, students prepare their Design for presentation.
  - Remember the FIGURE!!!
- Come prepared: ASSEMBLE THE MODEL AT HOME, not in class.  
Check out the notes on model building included in your Course Packet
- Label models in some way, indicating name of play and YOUR NAME. As well as submit flat materials in some sort of fashioned folder
  - (2 pieces of cardboard taped together will be more than sufficient).
- Make your design a complete design, i.e. indicate all the basic physical areas that a competent set designer would include. Follow the checklist below:
  - Deck (including platforms, rakes, stairs)
  - Sides and Above... This means MASKING... checkout the sightlines
  - Background or surround
  - Scenic Features (architecture, trees, freestanding units, furniture, etc.)

If your model is missing any of the above basic items, the model is incomplete.

### SUGGESTED TOOLS AND SUPPLIES:

- Sketch Book
- Sketching Pencils
- Plastic Eraser and/or Kneaded eraser
- Watercolors
- Watercolor Brushes
- 11 x 14 Bristol Board
- Foamcore
- Xacto Knife & Replacement Blades
- Straight Pins
- Cutting Board
- Craft Glue (Aileen's Tacky Glue)

### SUGGESTED DRAFTING MATERIALS:

- 36" T-Square
- 45 degree Triangle
- 36/60/90 Triangle
- Architects Scale Ruler
- Drafting Pencils (4H and HB)
- Drafting Tape

### PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

Two performance reports are **required** for all students in THR 214.

Attend two live performances during the semester

(One of which can be a professional production outside of the MSU Theatre Season).

Performance Reports may be turned in at any time during the semester, but are due by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

*(Please submit ALL performance reports in the appropriate ANGEL drop box)*

Write a one-page review/report/commentary on each performance, relating your comments to the visual design aspects of the show. Your report may cover the following...

- What was the play/show about? ...OK, what was it REALLY about?
- What do you think the production meant to communicate?
- How did you react to the play? To the production?
- What impressed you about the play? About the production?
- What did you particularly like and dislike, and WHY?
- How did you feel about the design? Describe and critique.
- Is there anything you learned about design from seeing this performance?

## GRADING SYSTEM:

Evaluation of individual class projects is based on a series of four criteria:

1. **COMPLETENESS** – Does the design include all the necessary parts, and does it cover the four physical/visual areas that all scene designers are obliged to pay attention to?
2. **QUALITY** – This means quality of design, synthesis of appropriate research, and general imaginativeness and good choices in aesthetic considerations. Did you use appropriate research? Is your design composition handsomely composed? Are the proportions pleasing? Does the design give a good indication of the world of the play? Quality also refers to the level of craftsmanship in the model, and attention to detail and expression of visual creativeness.
3. **PRACTICALITY** – How well does the design serve the dramatic needs of the play, from the standpoint of director and actors? Is there sufficient room provided for entrances? For acting areas? Are the traffic patterns reasonable? Is there a viable relationship between placement of acting areas and audience? Between the set and lighting? Between the set and Costumes? Does the set accommodate reasonably speedy set changes?
4. **SCALE/PROPORTION** – This refers to the accuracy of the applied scale. It also refers to the proportions of the design elements as they relate to the actors, to the theatre architecture, and to other design features. The use of proper scale is a good indication of how much care you took in building your model.

## GRADING BREAKDOWN:

- Each assignment grade is evaluated on three criteria: “application of course materials”, “quality of work”, and “completion 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:

*“Song Interpretation” Project – 5%*

*“Literary Excerpt” Project -10%*

*Design Rendering Reproduction- 5%*

*boom - 35%*

*Antigone - 40%*

*Performance Reports – 5%*

## GRADING SCALE:

- |            |   |     |           |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|-----------|---|-----|
| • 90%-100% | = | 4.0 | • 70%-74% | = | 2.0 |
| • 85%-89%  | = | 3.5 | • 65%-69% | = | 1.5 |
| • 80%-84%  | = | 3.0 | • 60%-64% | = | 1.0 |
| • 75%-79%  | = | 2.5 | • 0%-59%  | = | 0.0 |

**Ushering Info:**

Ushers are needed for all **Department of Theatre** performances. You can sign up for ushering by visiting the MSU Theatre website ([www.theatre.msu.edu/Productions/Ushers/](http://www.theatre.msu.edu/Productions/Ushers/)). Fill out the appropriate form and either e-mail it to the house manager address listed or return to the Dept. of Theatre office (113 Auditorium). This is a good way to see the show for **FREE**, but availability is limited.

**If you sign up – you must show up!**

**NOTE:** Productions can and do sell-out, so get your tickets in advance. Students are responsible for obtaining their own tickets to the required productions. For Pasant Theatre tickets call the Wharton Center Box Office at 432-2000, go online, or stop by.

**SOME IMPORTANT DATES (DOUBLE CHECK TIMES!!!):****Department of Theatre Events*****The American Clock***

September 22-26 & September 29-October 3, 2010  
Auditorium Arena Theatre

***Evil Dead: The Musical***

October 15-17 & 20-24, 2010  
Pasant Theatre

***Haunted AUD***

October 28-31, 2010  
Auditorium

***As You Like It***

November 16-21, 2010  
Pasant Theatre

**Williamston Theatre*****Blue Door***

September 23 - October 17, 2010

***Greater Tuna***

November 11 - December 19, 2010

**Stormfield Theatre*****Among Friends***

October 7-31, 2010

**Lansing Community College*****TBA Black Box Show***

October 1-9, 2010  
Dart Auditorium

**Wharton Center: Broadway Series*****Mary Poppins***

November 4 - 21, 2010  
Great Cobb Hall

**College of Music: Opera Theatre*****La Finta Giardiniera***

November 19 - 21, 2010  
Fairchild Theatre

## 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 you 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 214 – Intro to Scene Design**. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including 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/dishonestyFAQ.html> )

2. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** (from the *Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)*): Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("RISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.
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 **9/27/10**. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is **10/20/10**. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.
4. **Commercialized Lecture Notes:** Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is [permitted] [not permitted] in this course.\*\*
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **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.

\*\*Note: The Code of Teaching Responsibility requires instructors who permit students to commercialize their class lecture notes to include a statement in their course syllabi that gives such permission. Absent such permission, students may not do so.

### Integrity of Scholarship and Grades

At its February 24, 2009 meeting, Academic Council approved a motion from the University Committee on Academic Policy to revise the policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades. This policy is located in the Academic Programs catalog at <https://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=112#s534>.