

Stagecraft I



SYLLABUS

TD 139 – Spring 2012

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Required Reading:

- Ionazzi, Daniel A., *The Stagecraft Handbook*, Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1996. Print.
- Molière, *Tartuffe*, Acting ed., Trans. Richard Wilbur. New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2004. Print. (ISBN: 0-8222-1111-4)
- Gillette, J. Michael, *Theatrical Design and Production* (excerpt), 4th ed., Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000. Print. (No need to purchase. Available online – see the above web site.)

To Pass This Class with Flying Colors:

First and foremost, you've got to *want* to be here. This class is not intended for students simply trying to satisfy their arts requirement with no other interest in the subject. It's also not a class for anyone who thinks that stagecraft requires very little in the way of time commitment. Yeah, I know the class only meets once per week, but...

Work outside of the scheduled class time is essential. Art projects take time to complete and require research, collaboration, experimentation, and reinvention. You should expect to spend several days per week working on your independent projects – and in all likelihood, you will need to work in the shop. Most importantly, your work absolutely *must* be finished *on time*. There are no exceptions other than those spelled out in documents of official Colby policy.

What You're Graded On:

- Your demonstration of learning why this class is an important part of an education in drama.
- Your understanding and comprehension of the material being presented.
- Your demonstrated intellectual growth over the entirety of the semester.
- The initiative you take in all aspects of the class.
- The effort you make in immersing yourself in this experience.
- The value and quantity of research you do for your projects.
- Your proactive collaborations with other members of the class, and also with the Designers, the Directors and/or Choreographers, the Stage Managers, and the Performers in the show.
- The pride you apply to the quality of *your* work and to the importance of every project as a work of art representing not only yourself, but the department and even the college itself.
- Oh, and there'll be some quizzes. See the above web site for more information.

Grade Weighting:

Classroom Work and Participation = 30%,

Independent Projects = 30%,

Quizzes and a Safety Assignment = 30%,

Tech Rehearsals/Performances = 10%

Attendance = -3 percentage points from your overall grade per unexcused absence.

Department of Theater & Dance Policy on Empirical Grading:

All empirical grading will be based on the following criteria: "C" will be awarded for average work – completing the assignment as requested, nothing more. "B" will be awarded to students who exceed the requirements and do above-average work. "A" is reserved for those students who excel in all expectations and aspects of an assignment. "D" represents less-than-average work, and "F" is for failure to complete work with any degree of satisfaction.

Learning Goals and Expected Outcomes:

Stagecraft I introduces students to scenic construction, theatrical rigging, lighting production, and prop-making concepts, techniques, equipment, and materials, emphasizing problem solving through research, experimentation, and collaborative learning while considering the environment, economic choices, and safety. Students will learn to appreciate the performative aspects of stagecraft by participating in a behind-the-scenes role during the construction period, technical rehearsals, and performances of a faculty-directed, department production. Independent out-of-class work is essential. Previous experience is not necessary.

At the completion of the course, students should:

- Be able to recognize creative challenges in the process of stagecraft and identify appropriate tools, resources, and methods for problem-solving at an introductory level.
- Gain an appreciation of highlights from the history of stagecraft.
- Have an increased vocabulary of stagecraft terminology.
- Understand the basic concepts of theatrical rigging and be able to safely operate and load a counterweight fly system.
- Know how to read mechanical drawings and use a scale rule in the extraction of information from a ground plan, section, design elevations, and other technical drawings.
- Understand simple concepts of the physics behind lighting instrumentation and creative design choices; and be able to safely hang a light plot with an understanding of primary electrical formulas and data communication ideas.
- Consider the environmental and economic choices applied to materials usage.
- Appreciate the performative aspects of stagecraft by participating in a behind-the-scenes role during technical rehearsals and performances of a faculty-directed, department production.
- Be able to recognize potential risks and apply safe working practices in an inherently dangerous field of study.

Required Attendance Outside of Normal Class Times:

Every student in this class will be assigned a behind-the-scenes position for one of the department productions this semester. This could include operating the light board, running sound, moving scenery during scene changes, and other things needed to successfully stage the show. We will train you and you will need time to learn your "role" with the production. **You must attend all required rehearsals, performances, and the strike for this event and you will be graded on your participation and demonstrated learning.** Missing any of these dates will result in a minimum 2/3 letter-grade deduction for each unexcused absence (E.g. an 'A' will be lowered to a 'B+'). The exact dates and times can be found on the *Tech Rehearsal Schedule* handout provided on the first day of class and also available online at my web site. This schedule is subject to change. The most up-to-date version will always be posted online and supersedes any previous edition.

Academic Honesty in the Context of This Course:

All students should carefully read Colby's policy on academic honesty. This can be found in several places online (such as <http://libguides.colby.edu/content.php?pid=74285&sid=649056>) and also appears in the printed catalogue. In Stagecraft, it is easy to unknowingly plagiarize other's work whenever you are sharing source material from the Internet. Don't use anything you don't own unless you are crediting the owner of the work – even a picture from eBay needs proper citation! Also, pay special attention to the final sentence: "Without the approval of all the instructors involved, registration for two or more courses scheduled to meet concurrently is a form of academic dishonesty." This is particularly important with regards to your required attendance at the rehearsals, performances, and strike (described above) if you have another class with scheduled meetings in the evening. Any conflicts must be resolved and approved in advance, or you will be held accountable for academic dishonesty, subject to grading penalties, and possible action by the College.

Cell Phone Policy:

Cell phone usage during normal weekly class times is permitted in moderation only, but is not allowed during times when I am giving safety demonstrations, lecturing, or during quizzes. If, in my opinion, your cell phone becomes a distraction in any way, you will be asked to turn it off and will be graded down accordingly for failing to fully participate in class and for disturbing the learning of your peers.