

# Course Syllabus

## TAPS 30: Introduction to Theatrical Design

Winter 2019

[T/Th 9:30 - 11:20](#)

Rm. 126 Memorial Auditorium

(UG Reqs: WAY-CE)

### Contact Information

Primary Instructors: Erik Flatmo & Connie Strayer

Email: [eflatmo@stanford.edu](mailto:eflatmo@stanford.edu), [cstrayer@stanford.edu](mailto:cstrayer@stanford.edu)

Office: Erik: Memorial Auditorium, Rm. 238  
Connie: Memorial Auditorium, Rm. 130A

Office Hours: Erik: T/Th, 1:00 to 4:00. Please email in advance to confirm.  
Connie: By appointment.

Pronouns: Erik: he/him  
Connie: she/her

### Course Description

This course teaches students the fundamentals of design for the stage through hands-on studio projects, class discussion and short readings. Primary focus is placed on scenery and costume design, however lighting, projection and sound design will also be part of class discussion. Additionally, students are taught a basic design vocabulary that covers both practical and theoretical aspects of stagecraft. This course is intended as a gateway to more specialized courses in set, costume and lighting design. It is also an excellent primer for actors, directors and scholars who wish to know more about design. Collaboration and class participation will be emphasized. No prior experience in design or theater is necessary.

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

1. Explore the fundamentals of scenery and costume design through hands-on studio projects, class discussion and short readings.
2. Establish a basic vocabulary of theatrical design terms that will inform their understanding of theatre practice and analysis.
3. Create original costume sketches and a dimensional set model for a play as part of the final project.

## Course Expectations

This course does not rely on traditional reading and writing assignments. Instead, we ask students to devote time, effort and serious thought on their studio projects. Beware, many of these projects, such as model making, take much longer to complete than one might estimate, so please start your projects early.

The main goal of this course is to broaden and deepen students' understanding of design for performance. An ability to connect text and narrative to material, objects and space has applications beyond careers in set and costume design. This course is also a good place to work on collaboration, presentation skills and self-editing. All students, from aspiring actors to lawyers to software engineers, will find value in this course.

## Work Expectations, Assignments & Credit Options

Students attend two course sessions each week. Each session contains a mix of short lectures, demonstrations, group discussion, peer feedback reviews and relevant video clips

Overall, the course has three main sections: set design, costume design and the final project. Successful completion of the course will be based on the completion of all individual assignments within each component along with attendance and participation. The assignments within each component are as follows:

## 1. SET DESIGN COMPONENT

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE OF SET DESIGN GRADE
<i>Scenery Assignment 1: Pigott Model Box</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Scenery Assignment 2: 2D to 3D Project</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Scenery Assignment 3: Visual Research</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Scenery Assignment 4: Ground Plan</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Scenery Assignment 5: Simple Model</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

## 2. COSTUME DESIGN COMPONENT

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE OF COSTUME DESIGN GRADE
<i>Costume Assignment 1: Character</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Costume Assignment 2: Research</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Costume Assignment 3: Communication</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Costume Assignment 4: Renderings</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

## 3. FINAL PROJECT

Design scenery and costumes for a play (text to be assigned). Students will present their designs on the last day of class or on another day mutually agreed on. Presentations should include: visual research, a basic ground plan, a simple color model and costume sketches.

Students are also assigned a handful of short readings as indicated on the schedule below. The articles are posted on Canvas.

Students are expected to put in 4 to 5 hours of work per week on their projects outside of class. Room 126 Memorial Hall and the Arts Gym are possible locations where students may complete studio work after class hours. For successful completion of the course, each student is expected to complete all assignments, including the final.

Individual assignments are due as indicated on the course schedule at the end of this document. They should be turned in directly to the instructor (hard copy). Students should not email assignments.

Students may enroll for 4 units.

## Course Grade Calculation

The final course grade is composed of four components:

GRADING COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE OF COURSE GRADE
<i>Set Design Component</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Costume Design Component</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Final Assignment</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Attendance &amp; Participation</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

The grade for attendance and participation will be based on your level of engagement with the course as demonstrated by your ability to contribute to class discussion, ask questions and provide appropriate feedback to others. Students are expected to engage in discussions either critically or inquisitively. This enables all viewpoints to be presented for possible design approaches. Participation is directly linked to attendance. Please see attendance policy below.

The grade for each individual course assignment will be determined as follows:

<b>GRADING CATEGORIES FOR INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF LETTER GRADE</b>
<i>Completion of Checklist Elements (specific to each assignment)</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Overall Development (Presentation of work at different stages of development within the time period.)</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Demonstration of Ability to Incorporate Feedback from Instructor &amp; Other Students</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Overall Clarity and Strength of Work</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

- Work that scores high in all four categories will receive a grade in the A range.
- Work that scores high in three of the four categories will receive a grade in the B range.
- Work that scores high in only two or fewer categories will receive a grade in the C range or lower.

These grading guidelines are intended to work in accordance with Stanford's general university grading system:

[www.registrar.stanford.edu/students/definition-grades/general-university-grading-system](http://www.registrar.stanford.edu/students/definition-grades/general-university-grading-system)

## Readings, Materials, and Resources

### ART SUPPLIES

Students should bring the following art supplies, available for purchase at the Stanford bookstore or any local art store, to class:

Watercolor paint set (8 to 12 colors)

Watercolor paper or mixed media paper (8.5 x 11 minimum size)

Small set of colored pencils  
Non-mechanical pencil  
Black foam core (one sheet, 15" x 30" x 3/16")  
White glue (Elmer's)  
X-ACTO pen knife with replacement #11 blades

Additionally, each student should expect to spend roughly \$20 to \$25 during the course of the quarter on art supplies specific to their final project.

Items may be stored in Rm. 126 Memorial Auditorium.

## BOOKS

There are no required textbooks for this course. However, the following books are recommended for beginning design students and would be a useful purchase for students wishing to continue in the field:

Aronson, Arnold. *American Set Design*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985.

Carter, Paul. *The Backstage Handbook: An Illustrated Almanac of Technical Information*. Louisville, Kentucky: Broadway Press, 1994.

Cunningham, Rebecca. *Magic Garment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2009.

Ingham, Rosemary and Covey, Liz. *The Costume Designer's Handbook: A Complete Guide for Amateur and Professional Costume Designers*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann Drama, 1992.

Rose, Rich. *Drafting Scenery for Theater, Film, and Television*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 1990.

Smith, Ron. *American Set Design 2*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1991.

## INSTAGRAM

If possible, all students should follow the following Instagram account to become familiar with recent work in design for performance. It is updated weekly and is edited by Erik Flatmo:

[www.instagram.com/stagedesignsnapshot](http://www.instagram.com/stagedesignsnapshot)

## Course Website on Canvas

Course website: <https://canvas.stanford.edu/courses/93281>

The instructor will use Canvas to post the syllabus, schedule, assignment checklists, examples of design work and other materials. Students may use Canvas to submit assignments digitally, but hard copy work is preferred.

## Course Policies

### LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Assignments turned in after the due date will be deducted one third of a letter grade for that particular assignment. As with all assignments, they should be turned directly to the instructor or via Canvas, not email.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students who miss more than three excused absences will have their overall grade deducted by one third letter grade for each additional absence.

## Administrative Deadlines for Students

March 1 (Fri, 5:00 p.m.) Course withdrawal deadline

March 1 (Fri, 5:00 p.m.) Change of grading basis deadline

March 26 (Tue, 11:59 p.m.) Grades reported

## University Policies

### THE HONOR CODE

*It is expected that Stanford's Honor Code will be followed in all matters relating to this course. You are encouraged to meet and exchange ideas with your classmates while studying and working on homework assignments, but you are individually responsible for your own work and for understanding the material. You are not permitted to copy or*

*otherwise reference another student's homework or computer code. If you have any questions regarding this policy, feel free to contact the professor.*

*Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.*

*Students are responsible for understanding the University's Honor Code policy and must make proper use of citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research.*

## Course Schedule and Assignment / Assessment Deadlines

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENT DUE ON FOLLOWING COURSE SESSION
Week 1	Jan 8	Intro/ Syllabus Review	Image Assignment
	Jan 10	Image Review & Discussion	Costume Assignment 1: Character  Readings: "Diseases of Costume" and "Interview with Mark Thompson"
Week 2	Jan 15	Costume Creation & Purpose  Guest Costume Presentation 1	Costume Assignment 2: Research
	Jan 17	Costume Research	Reading: <i>Restoration Comedy</i> by Amy Freed
Week 3	Jan 22	Guest Costume Presentation 2	Costume Assignment 3: Communication
	Jan 24	Costume Communication  Guest Costume Presentation 3	
Week 4	Jan 29		



	Jan 31		Costume Assignment 4: Renderings
Week 5	Feb 5	Costume Presentations	Reading: selection from <i>My Life In Art</i> (Stanislavsky)
	Feb 7	Theater Architecture  Basic Model Making I	Scenery Assignment 1: Pigott Model Box  Reading: "To A Young Stage Designer"
Week 6	Feb 12	Basic Model Making II  Leg, Borders & Drops	Scenery Assignment 2: 2D to 3D  Reading: "Ornament & Crime"
	Feb 14	2D to 3D Presentations/ Visual Research Strategies	Scenery Assignment 3: Visual Research
Week 7	Feb 19	Basic Ground Plans	Scenery Assignment 4: Ground Plan
	Feb 21	Review Basic Ground Plans	
Week 8	Feb 26	Basic Model Making III	Scenery Assignment 5: Simple Model
	Feb 28	Model Presentations	
Week 9	Mar 5	Putting Scenery & Costumes Together	Students to begin working independently on final project
	Mar 7		
Week 10	Mar 12	Final Project Preliminary Ideas	
	Mar 14		
Week 11	Dates	End-Quarter Period	Online Course Evaluations
Week 12	Weds, Mar 20 8:30 am to 11:30 am	Final Project Presentations	

