

UMBC UGC New Course Request: THTR 439 Advanced Design Techniques

Date Submitted: 9/19/16

Proposed Effective Date: 1/25/17

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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	THTR 439
Formal Title	Advanced Design Techniques
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Advanced Design Techniques
Recommended Course Preparation	One credit of THTR 339 and completion of an Advanced Design course with a grade B or better.
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	Instructor Consent
Credits	1-3
Repeatable?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	⁹ This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (no longer than 75 words):

A laboratory course designed to give advanced scene, costume, lighting, and sound design students an opportunity to apply their studies on departmental productions. Students enrolled are expected to contribute significantly to both the design and play production process starting with initial concept meetings through opening night.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

As the curriculum changes from AY 13-14 have fully taken effect, we have noticed a need for our advanced design students to have greater opportunity to explore their chosen discipline with greater focus and higher expectations. Currently we have no course that satisfies this need by giving students a clear progression of advancement in their production assignments.

This course, to be taught every semester, will enroll students who have satisfactorily completed at least one semester of technical production in THTR 339 Advanced Production Techniques, and who have excelled in an upper-division design course (THTR 332 Advanced Scene Design, THTR 333 Advanced Costume Design, THTR 335 Advanced Lighting Design, or THTR 337 Advanced Sound Design). Because these pre-requisites are all at the 300-level, this course must therefore be offered at the 400 level to be clear in both its expectations and progression. Students who have not yet met these requirements or are enrolled concurrently in an Advanced Design course, but show promise, may be allowed to take the course with instructor permission.

As no two productions in theatre are ever alike, it is essential that students be able to repeat this course. It is understood that within the parameters of this course, students can increase the difficulty of their assignments with higher responsibilities and more independent research with successive enrollments. Assessment is provided two fold: a rubric of performance expectation based on preparation, attendance, and cooperative attitude, and an assessment of a reflection paper to be turned in at the end of the semester. Each student in the course will be mentored by a faculty in sections of their chosen area of concentration. This intensive mentorship model best

enables the student to apply his or her coursework into a practical setting, thereby better positioning him or her to enter the field upon graduation as a more marketable, experienced job candidate.

ATTACH COURSE OUTLINE (mandatory):

THTR 439: Advanced Design Techniques
Section 03: Costume
Shows in Production: *Agnes of God, Voracious*
Show in Design: *Rhinoceros*

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT

Eric Abele
Visiting Lecturer in Costume Design
abele@umbc.edu
865-335-9500 (cell: texting preferred)
PAHB 323

Office Hours:
Mondays 1:30 – 2:30 PM
Fridays 10:00 – 11:00 AM
Blackboard Instant Messenger
By Appointment

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A laboratory course designed to give advanced theatre students an opportunity to apply their studies in the design and technical aspects of theatre production. Students enrolled are expected to contribute significantly to actual productions as assistant designers, crew heads and in the coordination of major elements of the production process.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course is designed to transition an advanced student from studying costume design in a classroom setting to a professionally realized design and production process. An assistant costume designer is expected take THTR 339 or 400 over two semesters to cover the complete design (semester one) and production (semester two) process. Students who successfully complete THTR 339 or 400 as an assistant costume designer, as well as completing advanced costume design coursework, should be fully prepared to realize a design of his or her own, either at UMBC or another organization.

At the end of this course, each student will be able to demonstrate competency in the following areas:

1. Collaborative design techniques
2. Effective strategies for director/designer and designer/shop communication
3. Organizational processes and paperwork required to execute a costume build
4. Strategies for sourcing fabric
5. Appropriate behaviors and strategies for problem-solving during the production process

COURSE MATERIALS

1. A copy of the production script (on Blackboard)
2. Access to the Google production calendar (see Schedule of Classes for more information)
3. Access to Box

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

This course emulates the professional world of theatre. In that world, deadlines mean money, bosses have high expectations, and there are many people depending on the timely completion of your work (none of which depends on a grade). I will hold you to the highest possible expectations of being a professional. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Regular and timely attendance
2. Active engagement in the process
3. Positive and cooperative attitude
4. Quality and timeliness of work and deadline preparation

- Remember the Golden Rule of Business: a lack of planning on your part will not constitute an emergency on mine

Most importantly, **you are expected to keep your own schedule**. You should not expect the costume designer whom you are assisting to “track you down” or remind you of upcoming meetings. Missing meetings without prior excusal will negatively impact your grade.

Assistance

If you have already been given accommodation permission you need to bring your letter from Student Support Services. Students needing special accommodations in order to accommodate specific testing / learning needs should contact Student Support Services located in the Sherman Hall (Academic IV Building: B-Wing), Room 345 or online at www.umbc.edu/sss or by phone at (410) 455-3250. Students utilizing Students Support services are responsible to inform the faculty member so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Students who experience stress or other difficulties and find themselves in need of talking with someone regarding personal issues, trouble adjusting to the challenges of college life, anxiety, depression, or concerns about course work, social life, or the everyday pressures of being a college student are encouraged to contact University Counseling Services located in the Student Development & Success Center or online at www.umbc.edu/counseling or by phone at (410) 455-2472.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The largest portion of your grade comes from attendance of and preparation of design and production meetings, shopping, rehearsals, and fittings. Although there will be times in which schedules conflict (at which point your attendance will be excused), **it is your sole responsibility to maintain your schedule and participate in meetings with regular and timely attendance.**

In general the assistant costume designer represents the interest and work of the costume designer. Overall this requires the assistant to know the designer’s work and intentions as if they were his or her own. To facilitate this, assigned duties will generally include, but are not limited to:

Semester One: Design

- Reading the script and pre-meeting with the designer about the questions presented by the text, as well as initial problem-solving strategies
- Assistance or full preparation of organizational paperwork including, but not limited to, character lists, action charts, elements lists, and other documents
- Attendance of all design meetings as assigned by the Production Manager
- Participation in and/or response to the costume research process
- Note-taking for the designer in all meetings
- Organization of the Costume Design Bible
- Participation in the costume cost-out process
- Participation in the costume sketching, rendering, and coloring process

Semester Two: Production

- Attendance of all production meetings as assigned by the Production Manager
- Participation in and organization of the costume buying process to include, but not limited to:

- a. Fabric shopping, including working with the Costume Shop on attaining proper yardages within the pre-determined budget
 - b. Ready-made garment purchasing
 - c. Pulling from stock
 - d. Renting from neighboring theatre organizations
3. Weekly check-in meetings with the designer; working to keep the design on time and on target.
 4. Attendance and participation of all costume fittings
 5. Generating and maintaining the designer's to-do list
 6. Attendance of and note-taking during the following rehearsals:
 - a. Designer Run
 - b. Technical Rehearsals
 - c. Dress Rehearsals

In both semesters, keep in mind the following questions:

1. What can I do to help the designer?
2. What is the designer doing that I'd like to do?
3. What experience have I not had and would like to have?

Final Paper

The goal of this paper is to discuss the challenges presented and the lessons learned during the semester and to reflect on the experience. By and large, this paper serves as a self-assessment for the student's experience working in a professional context.

A printed copy of this paper must be submitted to the course instructor. **The deadline for Fall 2015 is on or before Friday, December 11, 2015 at 5:00 PM.**

In the final paper, the student assistant should include the following:

- A self-evaluation of the assistant experience, including job responsibilities, skills learned, aspects that were most successful, and areas of continued professional growth.
- A discussion of the ways in which the overall structure of the design and production process were effective or could improve.
- An evaluation of the experience with the costume designer; how does the designer's working method align or diverge from your own process?
- An analysis of what it means to be professional, both in terms of the student's working definition and the professionalism (or lack thereof) of the production team.

Rubric

A (90-100%) – Establishes a thoughtful, clear, and concise argument with supporting details. Clear beginning, middle, and conclusion. Paper is free of distracting spelling or grammatical errors. Follows parameters closely.

B (80-89%) – Paper presents an interesting idea or concept, while mostly making a clear argument. Overall structure of paper is organized. Argument and supporting details are good, but not strong. Paper contains few spelling or grammatical errors. Mostly follows parameters.

C (70-79%) – Paper is complete, yet lacking in its content. The central argument may be lost for the supporting details, or vice-versa. The paper’s structure has organizational problems. Spelling and grammatical errors are distracting. Does not follow some key parameters.

F (below 69%) – Paper is somehow incomplete and does not follow parameters. Spelling and grammatical errors are sloppy. The central argument is non-existent or extremely underdeveloped. The paper’s structure is weak and unfocused.

Parameters:

- 6-8 pages, 8.5 x 11 clean paper
- Printed, typed, double spaced
- Arial or Calibri, 11 pt. font
- 1” margins on all sides
- 1st person, narrative writing style
- Heading (first page only) contains
 - Name of course
 - Student name
 - Date
- Page numbers with last name

GRADING, ATTENDANCE, AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

Earning an “A” in this course is as straightforward as behaving like a professional artist, as discussed in the Course Expectations. Timely work and significant effort will be rewarded with an “A.” Before you are upset at not getting a perfect grade, ask yourself if the effort being evaluated is truly **exceptional** or simply **good**.

The essential components to your grade are **attendance** and **participation**. You may have one excused absence (unrelated to schedule conflicts) in the semester without affecting your grade. An excused absence is defined as a medical or family situation in which the student has made an effort to notify the instructor prior to being absent. More than one absence will require documentation of a significant event in order not to affect your final grade. Schedule conflicts discussed in advanced will not necessarily count as absences.

Grading Breakdown

1. Attendance and Participation: 60%
2. Final Paper: 40%

Lab Grading Rubric

Attitude

- A. Respectful of supervisor and other students, follows instructions
- B. Somewhat Respectful of supervisor and other students, follows instructions with encouragement
- C. Somewhat Respectful of supervisor and other students, rarely follows instructions
- D. Disrespectful of supervisor and other students, does not follow instructions

Teamwork

- A. Works well with others in assigned area, always willing to help where help is needed
- B. Works well with most others in assigned area, often willing to help where help is needed
- C. Works well with some others in assigned area, rarely willing to help where help is needed
- D. Does not work well with others in assigned area, unwilling to help where help is needed

Self-Motivation

- A. Arrives ready to work completes projects in a timely fashion and moves on to next project with little supervision
- B. Often arrives ready to work, completes projects and moves on to next project with supervision
- C. Often arrives ready to work, not always focused on the project, needs much supervision

- D. Rarely arrives ready to work, walks away from projects, needs constant supervision

Attendance and Punctuality

- A. Arrives on time for lab calls
- B. Often arrives on time for lab calls
- C. Sometimes arrives on time for lab calls
- D. Rarely arrives on time for lab calls

Appropriate Use of Time

- A. Effectively sets up and strikes space, leaves it in the proper “neutral” condition, completes the work of lab
- B. Effectively sets up and strikes space, leaves it in the proper “neutral” condition, sometimes completes the work of lab
- C. Leaves the space in an unworkable condition for other students, completes the work of the lab
- D. Leaves the space in an unworkable condition, does complete the work of the lab, impedes the ability of other students to complete their work.

General Grading Rubric

A (90-100%) Exceptional ability. Always thoroughly prepared. Extremely focused. Arrives in a timely fashion and shows strong engagement. Always works hard.

B (80-89%) Above average to average ability. Prepares often, at times thoroughly. Above average attitude and engagement. Works hard.

C (70-79%) Average ability. Preparation average to inconsistent. Lacks consistent focus and engagement. Average attitude and participation. Average work ethic with moderate effort.

D (60-69%) Below average ability. Preparation is inconsistent. Does not usually work hard, puts forth little effort. Multiple absences or tardies. Rarely participates without strong encouragement

F (0-59%) Poor ability. Preparation is insufficient to non-existent. Work is sloppy and done without effort. Attitude towards course is poor. Multiple absences or tardies.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC’s scholarly community in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Design and Production Meetings are determined by the Production Manager. Please email Gregg Schraven at schraven@umbc.edu to ensure you are added to the appropriate calendars, meeting notifications, and Box folder.

Please send me your complete course and outside conflict schedule for the upcoming semester with times identified as “available” for meetings and/or fittings. I will make every effort to arrange meetings with your schedule. You are required to establish a weekly meeting time with me. Weekly meetings usually do not last more than 30 minutes, but may be longer depending on the project’s current scope.

Your final paper is due **on or before Friday, December 11, 2015 at 5:00 PM.**