



TPA 4930: Special Topics: Introduction of Design 2025 Fall

COURSE SYLLABUS

**University of Florida
School of Theatre and Dance**

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Days: Tuesday & Thursday
Course Time 12:50pm - 2:45pm
Course Location: CON 219
Credit Hours: 3.00 Credits

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Josh Waltz & Michael James
Office Location: CON 216
Office Hours: Josh: Friday 10am-12pm Michael: Thursday 3pm-5pm
Email: Joshuawaltz@ufl.edu, Mi.james@ufl.edu

Course Description and Overview:

Introduces students to the fundamental elements of design and creates a foundation for a successful design process in entertainment.

Each chapter will be covered in detail in class and combined with projects to be completed in and outside of class. Each student will choose a professional designer of their choice and prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the class. Daily quizzes, mid-term and final exams will also be used to evaluate comprehension and retention of course material.

Course Objectives

Achieve a broad understanding of the fundamental theories, rules and elements of Design. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the design process and communicating through design. At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify, define, and describe terminology commonly used in fundamental principles of design.
2. Isolate and organize basic principles of design through various exercises in both 2D and 3D.
3. Employ various media and materials in order to create various exercises in both 2D and 3D.
4. Demonstrate repeated ability to practice design and composition skill.
5. Exhibit consistent willingness to put design work forward to the class for review and discussion; operate with receptivity to a revision process when needed.
6. Discuss ideas and design concepts with fluency.

7. Constructively participate in the critique of your work and the work of your peers.

Course Materials:

TEXT BOOK: Design Basics, 9th Edition
Stephen Pentak; David A. Lauer
ISBN-10: 1-285-85822-0

Accessing Media:

Canvas will be used regularly in this course. Students are expected to remain current with course content on Canvas.

Performance Attendance and Design Critique: You will be required to see two productions in the School of Theatre and Dance fall season. A two-page critique of the design elements of each production will be due on the following week of the final performance of each production.

Semester Assignments:

Reading Quizzes - Daily quizzes will be given on all assigned readings.

Designer Presentations – Each student will choose a professional designer of their choice and prepare a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation to be given in class.

Hands-on Projects - Each project will focus on the main elements covered in the text and will employ various techniques and tools used within the field of Design. Projects will be presented in class.

Production Critiques - A two-page scholarly critique of each required production will be due the week following its final performance. The format and instructions of the critiques will be covered in class.

Weekly Drawing Exercise – Visual communication skills are essential to develop for a career in design. Each week, students will be assigned targeted drawing development prompts. Drawings will be completed in class.

Final Project Self Portrait – Utilizing the principals and elements of design students will work in collage to design a self-portrait through their chosen area of design: lighting, scenery, or costume.

Exams: There will be two written exams administered in class: a midterm and a final. Exams are cumulative.

Grading:

Reading Quizzes- 100 points

Designer Presentation – 50 points

Hands-on Projects- 6 @ 50 points each, 300 Points total.

Production Critiques – 2 @ 50 points each, 100 Points total.

Weekly Drawing – 150 points

Final Project Self Portrait – 100 points

Mid-Term Exam – 100 points

Final Exam – 100 points

TOTAL- 1000 Points.

100% - 95%	A	76% - 73%	C
94% - 90%	A-	73% - 70%	C-
89% - 87%	B+	69% - 67%	D+
86% - 83%	B	66% - 63%	D
82% - 80 %	B-	63% - 60%	D-
79% - 77%	C+	59% - 0%	F

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class attendance is required and is critically important to faculty and your peers. Commitment and punctuality are essential to demonstrating professionalism. Whether present or absent, students are responsible for all material covered in class. Tardiness is unacceptable and will result in a lowering of your final grade. Students who arrive to class more than five minutes late must be invited by the instructor to participate. Two late arrivals are equivalent to one absence. A commitment to regular attendance and full participation at all classes is expected from the students. The success or failure of the learning process depends on the personal energy and cooperation of all involved. Creative collaboration is at the core of all theatrical work.

Unexcused Absences:

Absence 1 = free

Absence 2 = lose 10% of overall grade, resulting in a maximum final grade of 90%

Absence 3 = lose 20% of overall grade, resulting in maximum final grade of 80%

Absence 4 = lose 30% of overall grade, resulting in maximum final grade of 70%

Absence 5 = lose 40% of overall grade, resulting in maximum final grade of 60%

Two Tardies = 1 absence

Students who accumulate 5 absences will be asked to withdraw from the class immediately. If this withdrawal is registered by institutional withdrawal deadline, the grade will be a "W"; if after deadline, the grade will be an "E".

For Information on excused absences please see the official UF attendance policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students

<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

To see UF academic policies and resources, go to the [UF Academic Policies and Resources page](#).

CLASS SCHEDULE

(This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Students will be given notice of any alterations at least one class period ahead of time)

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY	READING
Week 1 1/13-1/15	Introductions, Syllabus	Project 1: Good or Bad Design?	
Week 2 1/20-1/22	Daily Quiz Lecture: Principles of Design as related to Design for Theatre and Design for Entertainment. Activity: Intro to the Design, Project 1 discussion	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Unity Activity: Project 2-Paper Collage	T-Chapter 1: Design Process TH-Chapter 2: Unity
Week 3 1/27-1/29	Activity: Continue working on Project 2-Paper Collage	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Emphasis, Focal Point, and Positioning	TH-Chapter 3: Emphasis and Focal Point
Week 4 2/3-2/5	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Scale and Proportion Project Activity: Project 3-Sculpt a $\frac{1}{2}$ " Scale Armchair	Daily Quiz Project Activity: Continue working on Project 3-Sculpt a $\frac{1}{2}$ " Scale Armchair	T-Chapter 4: Scale and Proportion
Week 5 2/10-2/12	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Balance Activity: Project 4-Figure and Still Life Silhouettes, Paper and Watercolors	Daily Quiz Activity: Continue working on Project 4-Figure and Still Life Silhouettes, Paper and Watercolors	T-Chapter 5: Balance <i>F.Punk Junkies</i> 2/6-2/15
Week 6 2/17-2/19	Production #1: Critique Due and discussion	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Rhythm, and Variation	T-Chapter 6: Rhythm
Week 7 2/24-2/26	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Line Activity: Project 5-Wire Sculpture	Mid-term Review	T-Chapter 7: Line
Week 8 3/3-3/5	MID-TERM EXAM	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Shape	TH-Chapter 8: Shape

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY	READING
		Activity: Project 5-Wire Sculpture	
Week 9 3/10-3/12	Daily Quiz Activity: Continue working on Project 5-Wire Sculpture	Daily Quiz Activity: Continue working on Project 5-Wire Sculpture	
Week 10 3/17-3/19	SPRING BREAK NO CLASS		
Week 11 3/24-3/26	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Texture and Pattern	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Illusion of Space & Motion	T-Chapter 9: Pattern and Texture TH-Chapter 10 Illusion of Space and Chapter 11 Illusion of Motion
Week 12 3/31-4/2	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Volume, Value, Contrast Activity: Project 6-Paper Volumetric Shapes	Daily Quiz Activity: Continue working on Project 6-Paper Volumetric Shapes	T-Chapter 12: Value <i>The Visit</i> 3/27-4/3
Week 13 4/7-4/9	Production #2 Critique Due and discussion Presentations of Designer Assigned	Daily Quiz Lecture/Discussion: Color Activity: Project 7-Color Mixing & Color Wheels	TH – Chapter 13 Color
Week 14 4/14-4/16	Daily Quiz Activity: Continue working on Project 7-Color Mixing & Color Wheels Final Project: Self-portrait Collage Presentations of Designer of your choice	Work on Final Project	
Week 15 4/21-4/23	Work on Final Project Final Review	Reading Day	
Week 16 4/28-5/1	Final Exam 4/29 Time tbd,		