



COSA

**Contra Costa School of
Performing Arts**

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The mission of Contra Costa School of Performing Arts is to provide a distinguished, pre-professional experience in performing arts within a college and career preparatory setting. We believe in fostering a culture of excellence with the core values of RIGOR, RELEVANCE, RESILIENCE, & RELATIONSHIPS.

Course Syllabus 2020- 2021

COURSE TITLE:	PERFORMANCE DESIGN LAB I		
PREREQUISITE:	Successful Completion of Stagecraft Series in Production and Design Major		
GRADE LEVEL:	LEVEL III Production and Design	COURSE LENGTH:	1 year
TEACHER:	AeJay Mitchell	CREDIT:	5 credits/semester
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, artist-scholars will refine their designer portfolio by deepening their skill-sets as multidisciplinary designers for the stage. As Stagecraft Lab I and II prepares students to craft and facilitate faculty vision, this level 3 course will support students as they begin to develop their own voice and style as designers. Working on four major projects over the course of the semester, the intent of this course is for designers to intersect their analysis of text, understanding of Art History, and research and synthesis skills to guide their first design creation for a Performance Studio Production.

Artist-scholars will also keep journals of daily discussions.

The course will be taught in 4 units:

Unit 1: Short Story Sound Boot-Camp

In this unit, artist-scholars will read one of a series of short stories. They will work on techniques of sound scoring using Q-lab by pondering "If this short story was a play or a film, how would you support the development of mood, intention, pace, and character identity through sound design? Create a thematic analysis, an artist's statement, and a fully designed sound score as your final product."

Unit 2: To Thrift and To Salvage: A Costume Parade and Light Show

In this unit, artist-scholars will choose five of [twenty-five movements](#)/styles of art to inspire a series of costume designs. The challenge will be to strengthen their skills of thrifting and salvage through recycled materials to design functional costumes representative of these art forms. These works must encapsulate the philosophy and mood of their genre of choice. These pieces must also be accompanied with a [light design](#) to highlight the color, texture, and mood of each costume choice.

Unit 3: Research and Recreation: A Comprehensive History of Set Design

In this unit, artist-scholars will strengthen their knowledge of set design history as they dive into *Making the Scene: A History of Stage Design and Technology in Europe and The United States*. Using found materials, they will reimagine a design from one of the periods researched and studied in this text. What works? What doesn't work? What needs to be shifted, and what needs to be enhanced? These are the constant questions the artists will ask themselves as we move towards showcasing this work.

Unit 4: Designing the Devised Show

As a final pre-requisite to Performance Design Lab II, students will combine the skills learned in Sound, Set, and Costume and Light Design creation to develop a concept for the Chance Theatre's One-Person Show. As PDL II primarily features design for MainStage Shows, this will be a soft entry to that work.

Important Dates:

- All families will receive a calendar with tentative performative and assignment "due dates."
- Though this calendar may fluctuate, this calendar is a general guide to what you can expect to experience this year.
- It is requested that one puts mainstage show dates, assignment due dates, and performative showing dates in their planner in pencil (in the rare case they may change.)

CORE TEXT & SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

Texts:

- 1) *A History of Stage Design and Technology in Europe and The United States.*
- 2) [Assorted Selection of Short Stories](#)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

COURSE SUPPLIES:

Artist-scholars should have a **composition notebook** specifically for this course to be turned in at the end of each week. artist-scholars should also have a folder to keep any handouts for the course readily available.

Artist-scholars should come to class with **clothes** in which they have **free and comfortable movement**. artist-scholars wearing overly tight non-stretch jeans, skirts or dresses (without leotard, tights, or dance shorts underneath), bagging pants that restrict movement (some loose fitting pants are, of course, appropriate to the culture of hip hop style and movement), sandals or flip flops, or any other accessory that will take away from full movement and exploration of their kinesphere will be asked to only observe the class, and will have their grades for participation deducted.

Access to a **charged Chromebook** at all times. If the student comes to class without a charged chromebook, his/her/their participation grade will be deducted.

GRADING POLICY:

Grading Design

Within the Department of Theatre, grading has shifted from a traditional point-based system to a skills-based system. Through rubrics, as described below, artist-scholars will be assessed on their mastery of specific cognitive and performative skills. These skills have been curated by theatre faculty and advisory council, and encapsulates

industry standards, National Core Arts Standards, and Common Core Standards. These skills have been grouped into nine weighted categories, which will define the student's final grade.

In further alignment with SPA's Academic grading philosophy, artist-scholars will have multiple opportunities to show mastery of skills assessed within the scope of this course.

Grading Rubric

For all assessed materials, artist-scholars will receive a rubric detailing their progress on skills identified by their instructor. artist-scholars will be scored on a 1-5 scale.

1: Artist-scholars are not performing or producing skill indicative of their conservatory training. This score will be given if student has shown little to no engagement in training, have not turned in written work, or performs far below their expected standard.

2: Artist-scholars are performing or producing skill below the expected average indicative of their conservatory training. This score will be given to artist-scholars who have shown some development of technique within their training, but have not yet reached levels of written, performative, and training room etiquette expected of our conservatory students. Most artist-scholars within conservatory begins their first semester with markings of a 2.

3: artist-scholars are performing at the baseline of their expected conservatory level. This score will be given to artist-scholars who are producing and presenting work at a surface level and are engaged in the process of their conservatory training. This marks a passing grade of C. Most artist-scholars end their first semester with markings of 3.

4: artist-scholars are moving beyond the base of their expected conservatory level. This score will be given to artist-scholars who have deepened their skill, producing and presenting work with more nuanced and some dimensionality. This involves skills assessed in previous units to final products in current units where those skills not necessarily being assessed. This marks a passing grade of B. Some artist-scholars are moving towards markings of 4 by end of third quarter and the beginning of fourth quarter.

5: artist-scholars are exceeding the expectations of their conservatory level. This student is producing and presenting work indicative of course mastery, integrating skills across multiple dimensions of assessment, and showing a deep physical understanding to performative techniques. This student is working at high levels of intensity and focus within the craft of theatre.

WEIGHTING

As mentioned above, our cognitive and performative skills are divided into nine weighted categories. These categories included: **performance technique, audition technique, dramatic writing, dramaturgical/directorial technique, theatre theory & criticism, theatre professionalism, journaling, rehearsal/warm-up ethics, and artistry.**

Grading will be weighted as follows:

"On-Stage" Performance	10%
Performance Technique/ Audition Technique	20%

Dramatic Writing/ Journaling	20%
Directing & Dramaturgy/Theory & Criticism	20%
Professionalism/ Work Ethic/Artistry	30%

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Artist-scholars at SPA are expected to maintain accepted standards for personal integrity when it comes to submitting written work for a grade. Neither copying work (no matter how small the amount) nor providing work to another student for the purpose of copying will be tolerated. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. This includes failure to cite sources using both in-text citations and a works cited and/or consulted page. Any instance of academic cheating will result in consequences as outlined by the SPA disciplinary code, up to and including a failing grade for the given assignment.

ATTENDANCE/TARDY POLICY AND CITIZENSHIP:

Courses within the Theatre Conservatory at SPA will follow the policies laid out in the [SPA Student Handbook on pages 19 and 20](#). Furthermore, As this course is performative and collaborative, artist-scholars should make every effort to exhibit regular attendance. Absences beyond three days whether excused or unexcused during a given unit may result in removal from a performative process with either an expectation of the project to be done solo OR an alternative project being assigned.

When possible, parents or artist-scholars should inform the instructor of the artist-scholar absence prior to the beginning of class. Unexcused absences during days where artist-scholars are due to present a performative work will result in a zero (0) for that particular project with a potential for displaying skills learned in the following performative project. They must return any due writing assignments in by the deadline regardless of their absence, unless discussed with faculty beforehand.

Emergency circumstances will be discussed on a case by case basis.

Artist-scholars who arrive late to class must remain outside of the space until they are invited in by their instructor, typically after warm-ups. Excessive tardiness and absences could lead to momentary dismissals from the training studios until an attendance contract is agreed upon by a Student Support Team including administration, faculty, parent/guardian, and student.

TEACHER CREDO:

The theater is an empathy gym where we come to practice our powers of compassion. There, in a safe space - sometimes in the dark audience, sometimes on the lit stage- we risk sharing in the lives of the characters. We feel what they feel, fear what they fear, and love what they love. And when we exit the theater doors, we take with us greater powers of understanding to make our community a better place, one play at a time.

Let's be empathy-builders, let's change the world.

Artist-scholar → I have read and understand this syllabus _____
Student Signature

PARENT/GUARDIAN → I have read and understand this syllabus _____
Parent/Guardian Signature