Syllabus • THEA 6352 • Stage Lighting

University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance

Spring 2009 • Wortham Stage Light Lab • Monday 12-2:30

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Office: COM 142A
Phone: 713.743.2816 (office) 713.962.4658 (mobile)

Objectives

☐ Provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the controllable properties of light

☐ Provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the tools of lighting design

Methods

Students explore the controllable properties of light through light lab workshops and design projects.

Learning Outcomes

Graduate students with a concentration in design will demonstrate professional expertise in their chosen field.

Projects

Intensity Project

Choose a three to five minute musical passage that explores a wide range of musical dynamics and create a series of lighting cues that supports those variations of dynamics through the intensity of light. No color media to be used for this project, still life and plot to be developed by the class and used by all.

Color Project

Choose a three to five minute musical passage and create a series of cues that respond to the music with color. A combination of gelled units and color scroller units will be used for this project. Students to select the still life to be used for their project, plot to be developed by the class. Gel strings will be assigned, individual color chosen by the student.
Texture Project

Choose a three to five minute musical passage and create a series of cues that respond to the music with texture in light. Plot to be developed by the class, color, templates, still life and focus to be determined by the student.

Text Project

Choose a three to five minute recorded passage of text and create a series of cues that respond to the voice and text with light. Plot to be developed by the class, color, templates, still life and focus to be determined by the student.

Moving Light Project

Choose a three to five minute musical passage and create a series of cues that respond to the music using a combination of moving and conventional lights. Plot and still life to be developed by the class, color, templates and focus to be determined by the student.

LAB ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Part I: Music Breakdown

Choose a selection of music that is from three to five minutes in length. Listen to the music to get a general idea of how the piece is developed and write a paragraph about your initial impressions of the music. Describe its emotional qualities, how the music moves, note any major changes that come to you.

Then break the music into its major sections by time, with a short musical description of each section following the format below.

0:00 statement of the major theme, one trumpet

0:45 repeat the theme, add strings

1:15 modulate the theme with a key change

2:00 big tempo change

Repeat the process until you feel that you have taken the piece apart into all of its sections and have described it the best that you can. You do not need to be a music major to do this, write what you hear.
Part II: Emotional Description
Once you have broken the music into sections by time and musical definition, the next step is to give the music an emotional definition. Write down the emotional feeling and visual image you see in your mind’s eye as you listen to the piece. Free association works best for this. These feelings and images do not need to be literal, let your mind run free, let the music take you over. Oh, it will help to think of light as you do this, i.e. this section is stark, isolated...it is lonely and diffused.... it feels like it is floating, cool..... etc.

Part III: Visual Description and Assigning Controllable Properties
Translate your musical and emotional descriptions into a visual description through the controllable properties of light. For each section assign as many properties as you feel apply.

Part IV: Visual Support
Now that you have painstakingly described, picked apart and analyzed your piece of music, present 4 to 6 photographs, pictures, or drawings that you feel best represent visually your analysis of the music. Pick images that best depict the controllable properties as you see them actualized with light.

Part V: The Lighting Design
Using the still life and light plot in the Light Lab, and using your musical descriptions as a basis, cue the piece of music. Remember, every section may or may not want a lighting change or cue. Several sections might be best served by one long cue, or not. Use your description as a guide. Prepare a light plot, channel hookup (Light Write), cue synopsis, and cue sheets.

Part VI: Renderings
Provide a rendering of three key moments of your project on black paper.

Part VII: Notebook
Turn in all supporting paperwork in one three-ring binder as follows for each project:

  - Initial impressions descriptive paragraph
  - Timed musical description
  - Emotional description
  - Visual description
  - Visual support
  - Light plot
  - Channel hookup
  - Cue synopsis
  - Cue sheets
  - Renderings
**Class Schedule**

1/26  Discuss Controllable Properties of Light
2/2   Group work session and lab set up
2/9   Group work session, control syntax
2/16  Intensity project presentation
2/23  Color workshop
3/2   Color project presentation
3/9   Distribution workshop
3/23  Texture project presentation
3/30  Movement workshop
4/6   Text project presentation
4/13  Moving light workshop
4/20  Moving light workshop
4/27  Moving light workshop
5/4   Moving light project presentation

**Grading**

Five projects, each project worth 750 points as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial impressions paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timed musical description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional description</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual description</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual support</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light plot</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel hookup</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cue synopsis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cue sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renderings</td>
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**Grades**

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<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3524 – 3375</td>
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<td>3374 – 3262</td>
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A student who receives a grade of “C+” or lower in four courses is ineligible to continue in the program.

**Class Attendance**

The University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance official attendance policy will be strictly adhered to.