



## THEA 251: Scenic and Lighting Design



**TIME:** Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:50-4:05 pm

**LOCATION:** Deming 105

**INSTRUCTOR:** Johnny Williams III (He/Him) Email: [WilliamsJA2077@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:WilliamsJA2077@marybaldwin.edu)

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-2:45 pm and by appointment.

**OFFICE LOCATION:** Deming 002

---

### Instructor Introduction:

Hello future scenic scholars and lighting practitioners! My goal with this course is to introduce students to fundamental principles of lighting design and scenic design through practical application and research. After this course, students will understand the elements used in modern theatrical design and the ways they relate to the history of theatre's past to cultivate designs for theatre's future. I have been working as a professional lighting and scenic designer for theatres in Illinois, Iowa, and Virginia since 2017.

I believe designers create the best supporting character for any show. The light directs the focus, defines the emotion, and provides necessary information, like the job of a supporting character. In addition the set defines the world for the characters and supports them along their story (Sometimes literally... aka a couch). Being a designer is no simple task, but understanding the elements that are used and have been used over time will prepare students for designing academically and professionally.



## Course Information:

### Course Description:

Students learn the responsibilities of scenic and lighting designers and the steps involved in the design and communication of ideas through drafting, model building, lighting plots, and hands-on experience in MBU productions.

### Content Notification:

- The design plays that are used throughout the semester may include discussions and depictions of violence, rape, incest, racism, and sexism.
  - Each play has its own content notifications and they will be given to each student when the design plays are decided.
  - The Design Plays are listed at the end of the syllabus. Students will not be required to read all the plays, but through familiarizing themselves with the titles they are interested in can help them choose which play to design. If a student would like more information about any of the plays, they can reach out to Johnny and he will be uploading scripts and descriptions of the plays.
- Each play covered in a session will have individual content notes listed the day before in preparation for the following class period.
- Please follow this [link](#) for more information if a content note is concerning prior or during class.
- If students are concerned about content or need to discuss accommodations further please contact me via email [WilliamsJA2077@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:WilliamsJA2077@marybaldwin.edu)

### Course Goals:

The aim of this course is to introduce the creative process of lighting designers and scenic designers through design projects and hands-on experience with lighting and scenic technology. Emphasis will be placed on the following:

1. Design Development
2. Elements of Design (Line, Scale, Movement, Light, Color, Texture)
3. Qualities of Design (Intensity, Distribution, Color, Movement)
4. Design Technology and Equipment
5. Design Application

### Course Materials:

(Both books are available online and will not need to be purchased for class)

1. Dennis Dorn's *Drafting for the Theatre*  
Available online: [Click Here](#)
2. Stephen Di Benedetto's *An Introduction to Theatre Design*  
Available online: [Click Here](#)
3. Required Materials
  - a. Graph Ruled Composition Notebook\*
  - b. Triangular Scale Ruler\*
  - c. Field Template (provided)



- d. Pencil
- e. Colored Pencils

\*These items can be purchased online for less than \$12. If you have trouble finding these items or financial hardship prevents you from purchasing it or any other item, please contact me privately. (These materials are needed by Sept. 4th)  
[Ruler Amazon Link](#) Also available at Staples for a similar price.  
[Graph Ruled Composition Notebook Amazon Link](#) Also available at Staples.

## Course Administration:

### 1. In Class Policies:

- a. Electronic devices are not to be used unless directed to do so by the instructor or if there is an accommodation through the Office of Accessibility Services.
- b. Beverages are permitted (and encouraged), but food is not.
- c. Respectful behavior toward the instructor, the classroom, and your fellow students is mandatory. Any violation of this will be met with swift dismissal.

### 2. Attendance Policy:

Because of the hands-on nature of this class, in-person attendance is essential. If you are quarantined by the university, or experiencing illness you may attend class virtually using Zoom. One unexcused absence will be permitted with no deduction to your participation grade. Every absence after that will result in 0/8 for that day's participation. Athletes are required to share any conflicts with the professor directly and will not be excused if the conflicts are not shared. Communication is key and I will be patient with you if and only if you communicate with me. Tardiness will result in a deduction of one point from your participation grade for that day.

### 3. Online Policies:

You will be required to use Canvas, and your Mary Baldwin email, and on occasion, digital resources available in Grafton Library. Should you need assistance with any of these platforms, contact the Center for Student Success, on the first floor of Grafton Library. Students will also have access to VectorWorks and LX Plan for assignments and these will be available in the computer lab in the bottom of Deming as well as in the Mac Lab in Deming.

### 4. COVID-19 and Illness

We are not required to wear masks, but anyone who opts to will be fully supported and allowed to do so. If you would like a mask and were not able to bring one to class, you can find a disposable mask in the GTF office of Deming, (Room 002). In the event that university case numbers go up, policies may need to adjust accordingly and notifications will be sent out.

### 5. Late Work

In the event a student is unable to complete an assignment on time, they **must** reach out to the instructor *prior to the assignments due date* with a proposed plan to complete the work. **The highest grade an assignment that is more than two weeks late can receive is a 65.** Late assignments may also not receive the same amount of direct instructor feedback. The instructor reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy on an individual basis.



## Assignments and Grading:

### Participation

The skills learned in this class are best learned in practice. Your participation in daily activities are essential for hands-on learning. Things like attendance, punctuality, and classroom civility factor into this daily grade.

Participation is worth 8 points per day, totalling 200 points.

(Each student's lowest participation point day will not be included in the 200 point total)

### Rubric for Design Play Creation and Presentations:

Preparation	20pts
Visual Presentation	20pts
Aural Presentation	20pts
Overall Effectiveness	15pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>75pts</b>

### Breakdown of Assignments:

Favorite Song's Lighting	75pts
Scenic Application Part 1 (In Class)	75pts
Design Play Stage 1	75pts
Scenic Application Part 2 (In Class)	75pts
Design Play Stage 2	75pts
Hanging and Focusing (In Class)	75pts
Design Play Stage 3	75pts
Design Play Stage 4	75pts
Final 3D Model	200pts
Participation	200pts

---

**Total 1000pts**

### Grading Scale

A	100-93	C	76-73
A-	92-90	C-	72-70
B+	89-87	D+	69-67
B	86-83	D	66-63
B-	82-80	D-	62-60
C+	79-77	F	59



## **Assignment Descriptions:**

### **1. Favorite Song's Lighting**

Students will create a lighting cue that will be shown in class that represents their favorite song. The students will need to be able to articulate choices of: color, temperature, angles, shadows, focus, and intensity. 30 seconds of the song will play while the class enjoys the cue. After the 30 seconds, the student will be expected to speak to elements of the cue's creation for 2 minutes. The student will need to be prepared to answer questions on each element of design listed above. Lighting plots will be provided. Due September 5th (Worth 75 Points)

### **2. Design Play Stage 1: Ground Plan by Hand**

Using graph paper, scale rulers, and pencils students will create a ground plan for an important scene of their design play they have selected. The ground plan will utilize the elements of ground plans as they are outlined in Dennis Dorn's *Drafting for the Theatre* Part 5. Students will need to be able to label and illustrate elements of the design according to scale, use, and relation to other objects. There is no limit on size of venue and students are encouraged to think creatively on what size would be appropriate for their design play. During class on September 14th students will present their ground plans in front of the class and answer questions on decisions that led to the design they chose. In the bottom right corner students will have a key that contains all necessary elements for a ground plan (This is also outlined in Dorn's book in Part 5). The students will be graded on their ability to effectively design the ground plan for their design play, and their ability to use the tools and elements necessary. Due September 14th (Worth 75 Points)

### **3. Design Play Stage 2: Lighting Plot by Hand**

Using graph paper, scale rulers, lighting templates, and pencils students will create a lighting plot for their design play they have selected. The lighting plot will utilize the elements from the assigned videos and the lighting plot handouts. Students will need to be able to label and illustrate elements of the design according to scale, use, and necessary lighting plot components. There is no limit on size of venue and students are encouraged to think creatively on what size would be appropriate for their design play. During class on September 21st students will present their lighting plots in front of the class and answer questions on decisions that led to the design they chose. In the bottom right corner students will have a key that contains all necessary elements for a lighting plot (This is also outlined in Dorn's book in Part 5). The students will be graded on their ability to effectively design the lighting plot for their design play, and their ability to use the tools and elements necessary. Due September 21st (Worth 75 Points)

### **4. Scenic Application Part 1 (In Class)**

As a class we will work on the beginning steps of scenic design application for the upcoming production of *The Wreck*. The scenic design ground plan will be handed out to each student and the class will be divided into groups. The groups will work in their designated zone to implement marking the ground plan on the stage using tape, scenic elements, and seating arrangements. The



class will need to work together to make sure the ground plan is cohesive and effective for the next steps in the design application. The students will be graded on their ability to effectively implement the ground plan, and their ability to work collaboratively in class. (We will be moving scenic elements this day so please dress comfortably and safely. Please reach out to me with any concerns). Performed Tuesday October 24th in class (Worth 75 Points)

### **5. Design Play Stage 3: CAD Scenic Programing**

Students will use VectorWorks to create a CAD version of their ground plan. Using the tools necessary on the software, students will take the groundplan they already created by hand and transfer the design into a computer version. Elements from the hand drawn ground plan can change slightly, but the students should aim to translate their physical design into an electronic one. Elements of scale, layout, clarity, and labeling will contribute to the completion of this assignment. The computers in the lab next to the theatre will all have VectorWorks available for the students to use. The design will need to be saved and emailed to Johnny once completed. During class on October 10th students will present their CAD ground plans in front of the class and answer questions on decisions that led to the design they chose. (Johnny will pull the designs up that have been turned in; however students are welcome to open their design via email as well). The students will be graded on their ability to effectively design the CAD Ground Plan for their design play, and their ability to use the tools and elements necessary.

Due October 10th (Worth 75 Points)

### **6. Hanging and Focusing (In Class)**

As a class we will work to hang the lighting plot for the upcoming production of *The Wreck*. The lighting plot will be handed out to each student and the class will be divided into groups. The groups will work in their designated zone to implement the lighting plot by hanging, focusing, and cabling the instruments. The class will need to work together to make sure the instruments, cabling, and security cables are being used effectively for the design. The students will be graded on their ability to effectively implement the lighting plot, and their ability to work collaboratively in class. (Use of ladders will be implemented on this day, please reach out to me with any concerns). Performed October 19th and 24th in class (Worth 75 Points)

### **7. Scenic Application Part 2 (In Class)**

As a class we will work on the steps of scenic design application for the upcoming production of *The Wreck*. Scenic Design elements will be handed out to each student and the class will be divided into groups. The groups will work in their designated zone to implement several different elements of executing the design: from painting, to moving scenic elements, to hanging walls and backdrops. The class will need to work together to make sure the design elements are cohesive and effective for the final steps in the design application. The students will be graded on their ability to effectively implement the design, and their ability to work collaboratively in class.



(We will be moving scenic elements this day so please dress comfortably and safely. Please reach out to me with any concerns). Performed November 14th and 16th in class (Worth 75 Points)

#### **8. Design Play Stage 4: CAD Lighting Programing**

Students will use LX Plan to create a CAD version of their Lighting Plot. Using the tools necessary on the software, students will take the lighting plot they already created by hand and transfer the design into a computer version. Elements from the hand drawn lighting plot can change slightly, but the students should aim to translate their physical design into an electronic one. Elements of scale, layout, clarity, and labeling will contribute to the completion of this assignment. The computers in the lab next to the theatre will all have LX Plan available for the students to use. The design will need to be saved and emailed to Johnny once completed. During class on November 7th students will present their CAD ground plans in front of the class and answer questions on decisions that led to the design they chose. (Johnny will pull the designs up that have been turned in; however students are welcome to open their design via email as well). The students will be graded on their ability to effectively design the CAD Lighting Plot for their design play, and their ability to use the tools and elements necessary.

Due Tuesday November 7th (Worth 75 Points)

#### **9. Final 3D Model of Design Play**

Students will create 3D models of their design play. The 3D models should be based on the ground plans and lighting plots they have created this semester. Students can use cardboard, clay, colored pencils, paint, photographs, and any other materials imaginable. On November 21st there will be time in class with materials provided that students can use. The purpose of the ground plan is to effectively communicate the design to the audience and assist in imagining the unrealized scenic design. The Rough Draft 3D Model is due on October 31st, but no materials need to be turned in. This will be a time to check in with Johnny to explain the ideas you have to create the 3D model. Students will be graded on effectiveness of the design, clarity of scenic elements used, overall quality of the design, and preparation prior to the final model. The 3D models will be presented in class on November 30th and students will be asked questions about the model. Students should study the key terms from the quiz on November 2nd to make sure each term is being utilized in their models. Due November 30th (Worth 200 Points)



## University Policies:

### Statement of Inclusivity:

We, the community of Mary Baldwin University, strive to celebrate humanity in all its wondrous and complex variations. Because we value diversity, it is our mission to sustain a community where all may flourish. We are safe to embrace our shared experiences and our differences. To this end, we treat all with respect and compassion.

### Accessibility Services:

Mary Baldwin University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, due to a documented disability, please contact Ms. Stephanie Hutchinson, Director of Accessibility Services to request testing or classroom accommodations ([sdhutchinson@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:sdhutchinson@marybaldwin.edu), 540-887-7250). Required documentation must include an evaluation by an appropriate medical professional and must describe the current impact of the disability as it relates to the request for accommodation, in compliance with the ADA.

For more information about your rights and responsibilities, contact:

Customer Service Team  
Office of Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202-110  
[ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov)  
[www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)  
800-421-3481; TDD 877-521-2171

On the first day of class Johnny will hand out and collect an accessibility information sheet which can be edited at any point throughout the semester. This form is confidential and helps the instructor address any needs for students. Contact Johnny directly if concerns arise.

### Honor Code:

MBU students may not engage in behaviors or actions that endanger themselves or others, either while on MBU's property or engaged in a program or activity connected with the college and/or its programs. Students are required to comply with professional standards of school in which they engage in research, internship work, teaching, or other activities connected with the college and/or its programs.

**Plagiarism:** As outlined in the [Student Honor Code](#), plagiarism is not tolerated. The Student Honor Code described plagiarism as follows:

*The use of someone else's idea or work without acknowledging the source of the idea or work. Sources may include but are not limited to papers, written or spoken statements, and works of art. If a student discovers they have made some mistake in acknowledging sources in a paper already submitted, they must make this fact known to their instructor immediately. The Honor Council will not accept a plea of ignorance. Examples of plagiarism include:*





- *Failure to use quotation marks when using the exact words of another.*
- *Changing only a few words of a quotation and representing it as a paraphrase rather than a direct quote (even when the source is cited).*
- *Failure to provide citation of the source material when paraphrasing ideas.*

## **Title IX:**

Sexual misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated in the classroom. If you feel that an incident of sexual misconduct occurred, we ask that you report the incident to the police, the instructor, or the Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:titleix@marybaldwin.edu), or via the report form at [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MaryBaldwin&layout\\_id=2](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MaryBaldwin&layout_id=2). For more information on Title IX or for more resources, please visit <http://www.marybaldwin.edu/title-ix/>.

## **The Academic Resource Center:**

The ARC provides writing, math, and subject-area tutoring services. Residential students can meet with tutors virtually or face-to-face in the Center for Student Success, on the first floor of Grafton Library. Online and remote students can work virtually with tutors on papers, assignments, and test-taking strategies. Appointments are scheduled through HandShake. For more information, contact Stephanie Hutchinson, Director of the Academic Resource Center, [sdhutchinson@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:sdhutchinson@marybaldwin.edu) or [ARC@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:ARC@marybaldwin.edu).

## **Helpful MBU Resources**

The Writing Center - [go.marybaldwin.edu/learning-skills/](http://go.marybaldwin.edu/learning-skills/)

For assistance with writing or class assignments.

Grafton Library and Librarians - <http://libguides.marybaldwin.edu/home-new>

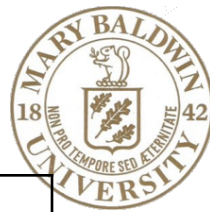
For assistance with research.



## Course Schedule:

Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:50-4:05 pm in Deming 105

Weeks	Date	Assignment Due	Task in Class
Week 1	Tuesday August 29th		Syllabus Review, Class Logistics/ Introductions
	Thursday August 31st	Reading: <i>Di Benedetto</i> Chapter 6: Light p125-142 & <i>Dorn</i> Part 1: The Pencil and CAD p3-8	Lecture: Painting with Light: The <i>FUND</i> amentals of Lighting Design.
Week 2	Tuesday September 5th	Favorite Song's Lighting	Favorite Song's Lighting Presentation
	Thursday September 7th	Favorite Song's Lighting Part 2	Favorite Song's Lighting Presentation Part 2
Week 3	Tuesday September 12th	Reading: <i>Di Benedetto</i> Ch. 4 Set p73-84 & <i>Dorn</i> Part 5: Drawings p183-189	Lecture: The Room Where It Happens: The fundamentals of Scenic Design.
	Thursday September 14th	Design Play Stage 1: Ground Plan by Hand	Presenting Ground Plans
Week 4	Tuesday September 19th	Watch: Matt Kiser Lighting Video & <i>Wicked</i> Lighting Video	Lecture: What Makes a Lighting Plot? <i>And Lighting Field Trip</i>
	Thursday September 21st	Design Play Stage 2: Lighting Plot by Hand	Lighting Plot by Hand Presentations
Week 5	Tuesday September 26th	Reading: <i>Dorn</i> Part 4 Computer Drafting p155-172	Lecture: Vector Works and how it works
	Thursday September 28th		Lecture and Application: Vector Works
	Tuesday October 3rd	APPLE DAY	NO CLASS
Week 6	Thursday October 5th		In class work day
Week 7	Tuesday October 10th	Design Play Stage 3:	CAD Scenic



		CAD Scenic Programing	Presentations
	Thursday October 12th		Lecture: Safety Protocols and Procedures & Light Hanging
<b>Week 8</b>	October- 13th-16th	FALL BREAK	NO CLASS
<b>Week 9</b>	Tuesday October 17th		
	Thursday October 19th		Hanging and Focus
<b>Week 10</b>	Tuesday October 24th		Scenic Application 1
	Thursday October 26th		Lecture: CAD Lighting; Instruments and Tools
<b>Week 11</b>	Tuesday October 31st	Reading: <i>Dorn</i> Part 2 3D to 2D and Back p79-88	Lecture: Putting the Model in 3D Modeling
	Thursday November 2nd	Key Terms Review	Quiz on Lighting and Scenic Elements and Scenic Application
<b>Week 12</b>	Tuesday November 7th	Design Play Stage 4: CAD Lighting Programming	CAD Lighting Programming Presentations
	Thursday November 9th	Final 3D Model Rough Draft Due	One-on-one Sessions and Scenic Application
<b>Week 13</b>	Tuesday November 14th		Scenic Application 2
	Thursday November 16th		Scenic Application 2
	<b>Performances of <i>The Wreck</i> November 17th-19th</b>		
<b>Week 14</b>	Tuesday November 21st		In Class Work Day
	November 22nd-26th	THANKSGIVING BREAK	NO CLASS
<b>Week 15</b>	Tuesday November 28th	Reading: TBD	Designers in the Field: (Guest Artist)
	Thursday November 30th	3D Model of Design Play	3D Model Presentations



## Suggested Design Plays

*Choir Boy*

Tarell Alvin McCraney

*The Spoon River Project*

Tom Andolora

*The 39 Steps*

Patrick Barlow

*Waiting for Godot*

Samuel Beckett

*Mother Courage and Her Children*

Bertolt Brecht & Margarete Steffin

*Medea*

Euripides

*Noises Off*

Michael Frayn

*"Master Harold"...and the Boys*

Athol Fugard

*The Most Massive Woman Wins*

Madeleine George

*The Lion in Winter*

James Goldman

*The Dining Room*

A.R. Gurney

*Crimes of the Heart*

Beth Henley

*Exit the King*

Eugène Ionesco

*The Fourposter*

Jan De Hartog

*Ubu Roi*

Alfred Jarry

*Angels in America*

Tony Kushner

*Clybourne Park*

Bruce Norris

*Sweat*

Lynn Nottage



*She Kills Monsters*

Qui Nguyen

*Topdog/Underdog*

Suzan-Lori Parks

*God of Carnage*

Yasmina Reza

*Eurydice*

Sarah Ruhl

*In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)*

Sarah Ruhl

*The Tempest*

William Shakespeare

*Macbeth*

William Shakespeare

*Doubt: a Parable*

John Patrick Shanley

*Playboy of the Western World*

John Millington Synge

*Spring Awakening: A Children's Tragedy*

Frank Wedekind

*The Importance of Being Earnest*

Oscar Wilde

*Fences*

August Wilson

*Tribes*

Nina Raine

*Peter and the Starcatcher*

Rick Elice

*The Crucible*

Arthur Miller