

Drama 510 Syllabus:

Drama 510 or 'Studio' is open only to MFA Design and Directing Candidates. Each MFA Design Student in Costume or Scenic Design will take Studio each quarter of residency in the MFA program. Lighting Design Students will take it each quarter of their first year and again in the Spring of the second year. (2nd Year Lighting students audit the course in Fall and Winter, and only do the group project in the Spring.) The course has many goals and while all are present in all three years of study, different aspects of these goals will be emphasized more or less at different times of a student's tenure.

The most fundamental goal is to prepare students for a career as professional designers for the stage. Focusing primarily on Scenery and/or Costumes students will practice creating original designs for plays, operas, dance, and or music pieces. In some cases design work related to lighting and/or sound may also be required. In creating these designs, students will be asked to invent personal, unique, visual responses to complex artistic, social, and/or political challenges. In designing environments and characters students will create representations of racially, ethnically, sexually, socio-economically and historically diverse populations, keeping in mind a production that would affect a (potentially diverse) audience in a timely and relevant way. The performing arts have a unique ability to do this and we aim to train students to do this work in a spirit of integrity, excellence, collaboration and effective communication.

To do this work, students will be required to engage in text analysis, dramaturgy, research, drawing, drafting, painting, model making, swatching, sampling, and photography, as well as other design related activities. There are many skills classes outside of Design Studio that will aid students in working in these areas. Over the course of the three years, each student is expected to combine these skills with his or her personal vision to create coherent, clearly communicated (visual) responses to textual, musical, physical and/or non-verbal programs.

It is an important aspect of this class that each student will have an extended period of time to develop a personal methodology that is effective and efficient in clearly conveying visual and textual ideas in a timely manner. Students are encouraged to explore alternate modes of drawing and modeling (changing scale, media, order of process, etc.) It is very important also that each student develop a methodology that allows him or her to 'work quickly' and also to constantly develop and improve his or her ability to communicate effectively with peers, collaborating designers, directors, technicians and other production personnel.