

Syllabus for THTRE 393D

Sound Design

Fall 2020

Tuesday/Thursday

12:40 pm – 1:55 pm

Instructor: Will Coeur

Room Number: Fisher 0213

Office: <https://iastate.zoom.us/j/91514301015>

Office Hours: MWF 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Email: wcoeur@iastate.edu

Course Goals

An introduction to the basic concepts, techniques, and technologies utilized in the art of sound design, with an emphasis on the entertainment control software, QLab. This course is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue a career in stage management.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance of all ISU Department of Music and Theatre Main Stage (3) productions.
2. Successful completion of all class exercises and projects.
3. Attendance to all class sessions either in person or via web conferencing.
 - a. Attendance counts as 10% of your total grade with each absence subtracting from that amount, approximately 0.35% per absence.
 - b. Daily Discussion points will also be deducted per absence, approximately 0.18% per absence.
 - c. If you are absent on a day you have a presentation due you will receive a 0% on that presentation unless you can provide proof of illness.
 - d. See COVID-19 addendum towards the end of the syllabus.
4. Late work will not be accepted. Exceptions to this requirement are not likely, but are solely at the discretion of the Instructor. Life happens so talk to me if you think your situation may require an exception.
5. An active ISU email account.

Texts

QLab 4: Projects in Video, Audio, and Lighting Control

by Jeromy Hopgood

Publisher: Routledge; 2nd Edition (2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1138036412

ISBN-13: 978-1138036413

Equipment

Microphone compatible with your laptop or phone
Apple brand computer (optional, but recommended)

Scripts

The Glass Menagerie: Acting Edition

by Tennessee Williams

Publisher: Dramatists Play Service, Inc. (1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0822204509

ISBN-13: 978-0822204503

Into the Woods

We will only work with Scene 1, which will be provided to you.

The 39 Steps

This play will be provided and will serve as the script for your Final Project.

Grading and Major Assignments

Attendance	10%
Discussion	5%
Production Analysis	15%
Design Projects	25%
Practical Projects	15%
Sound Design 1	10%
Sound Design 2	20%

Grading Scale

A	93% - 100%	C	73% - 76%
A-	90% - 92%	C-	70% - 72%
B+	87% - 89%	D+	67% - 69%
B	83% - 86%	D	63% - 66%
B-	80% - 82%	D-	60% - 62%
C+	77% - 79%	F	0% - 59%

Attendance (10%)

As mentioned in the Course Requirements, Attendance is 10% of your overall grade. However, multiple absences will not result in an automatic academic penalty, though you will lose your daily points. Attendance will be counted until roughly 40% of the class time has expired, at which point you will be counted absent unless you have given me prior notification that you are running late, but are on your way. I must receive that notification before class begins.

Discussion (5%)

Discussion is worth 5% of your overall grade. To receive full daily points for Discussion you do not necessarily need to contribute to the discussion, but you must be obviously fully-engaged in the conversation/lecture. Contributing to the conversation will practically guarantee you full Discussion points for the day. While you can arrive slightly late and still receive full Attendance points, you will begin to lose Discussion points from the moment class starts if you are absent, so try to arrive on time. However, late arrival can be counteracted by an engaged contribution to the discussion.

Production Analysis (15%)

Students will be expected to attend and critique all main season shows that are produced during the term. These critiques should be a minimum of three pages long and follow proper MLA format. Critiques should focus on the various design elements of the production, especially sound, and how they worked (or did not work) together.

Design Projects (25%)

Students will complete three different "non-theatrical" sound design projects. The purpose of these projects will be to develop the student's creative abilities regarding the collection, creation, and use of sound. While it is not strictly required, the use of copyright-free material is strongly suggested as much as possible.

Design Project 1 - Score a Short (5%)

Students will be able to choose from a selection of animated shorts to analyze, evaluate, and then underscore. The animated shorts have had all traces of music removed while leaving as much other sounds as possible to create context of the world. Successful scores will help the viewer evoke a mood in line with the action happening within the animated short. Projects can be submitted as a new video file with your score attached to the animated short, or as a single audio file only as long as the only remaining step is to align the 0:00 of the singular audio file with the original short.

Design Project 2 - Foley Spamalot Project (10%)

Students will be given a film clip that has had everything but the dialogue edited out of it. Students must create, from scratch, all necessary sound effects using the Foley method of sound design. In addition to the project file students must be able to prove creation of the sound effects by utilizing a Box folder for the project that will be shared with them by the Instructor. This folder should include the original recording, editing files, and final sound effects files. To reiterate, all sound effects used, must be created and recorded by the student for them to be acceptable. A successful project is one that is creative, even if the final product is not incredibly realistic.

Design Project 3 - Experimental Sound Project (10%)

Students will produce an "experimental music" piece approximately 4-5 minutes in length using non traditional sounds and tones. The purpose of this project is to push the student outside their comfort zone and create something unique. While traditional musical sounds and tones are not to be used, this is more of a bulk guideline. What this means is if a student would like to accent a particular moment with a singular note from a musical instrument, that is perfectly acceptable. Instruments should be avoided as underscoring and utilized only as accents as needed. In addition to the piece, students must submit a short essay describing the intent and any narrative moments hoping to be achieved. Think of this project like you are writing a poem, but you have lost your words, and all you can find are non-musical sounds to express yourself.

Practical Projects (15%)

Preshow Announcement (5%)

Students will record a preshow announcement. Students may select any existing show to use as the basis of this preshow announcement. These can be themed announcements or generic. All announcements must include:

Approximate runtime

No video recording or photography

Silence all electronic devices

A statement of how many intermissions and their length (even if there is no intermission)

In case of an emergency statement

The preshow announcement can be recorded with whatever device the student prefers. A successful preshow announcement will be clear, concise, and edited to remove any unwanted elements, such as background noise, white noise, and breathy-ness.

Prep a Live Mix Project (5%)

Students will create a notated script of a scene from a musical provided by the Instructor. This script should be marked up to be used for line-by-line live microphone mixing. This can be done on a physical copy of the script or digitally as long as the final product is clear and easy to understand. A successful script will also include a cheat sheet that indicates microphone assignments. Please note that microphone assignments are at the student's discretion, but it is encouraged to analyze the scene and assign related characters together.

Video Map Obstacle Course (5%)

This in-class project will test the student's capabilities in regard to video mapping via QLab. Students will be given 5 minutes to accurately video map multiple stage elements as quickly as possible. Some objects will be fully mappable from one projector while others will require meshing two projectors together. The goal of this project is not perfection, but efficiency. Final map will be tested with premade video elements.

Sound Designs (30%)

Students will complete two theatrical sound designs. The purpose of these projects will be to demonstrate the student's understanding of common design and prep practices. By the end of these projects, students should be able to analyze a play, create accurated sound effects and underscoring, and present this work in an understandable format. Students are encouraged to use copyright free material, but it is not a requirement on either project. Additionally, it should be assumed that the actors do not require amplification so there is no need for microphones in either project except for use in special effects as desired.

Sound Design 1 - *The Glass Menagerie* (10%)

Students will create a full sound design for *The Glass Menagerie* including any/all sound effects and underscoring necessary to reinforce the story. Students are encouraged to think creatively and are given artistic license to make decisions about how the show is staged such as scene transitions and how long characters may be alone onstage where underscoring may be required. There are no limitations on speakers in regard to amount or locations. The only definitive is that it is a unit set so no scenic pieces move between scenes. Students will be given access to a Box folder shared by the Instructor in which to submit their projects. Scenes will be divided by folder and all sound cues related to that scene should be placed in cue number order. Examples will be given in class.

Required Elements: Sound Cue Sheet, Sound Cues organized by scene and cue number.

Sound Design 2 - *The 39 Steps* (20%) **FINAL PROJECT**

This project will double as the student's final. Students will create and execute a full sound design for *The 39 Steps* including any/all sound effects and underscoring necessary to reinforce the story. Students are encouraged to think creatively and are given artistic license to make decisions about how the show is staged such as scene transitions, scenic/actor placement, and actor blocking in general. The only definitive is that this show is taking place in Fisher Theatre and therefore must utilize the existing system. In addition to the permanent speakers there will be two additional speakers on stage (one on SL and one on SR) that can be placed anywhere that can be reached. Please discuss these placements with the Instructor as early in the process as possible. Students will be given access to a Box folder shared by the Instructor in which to submit their projects. Scenes will be divided by folder and all sound cues related to that scene should be placed in cue number order. Examples will be given in class. Since these projects are being designed for Fisher Theatre they will be presented in Fisher Theatre. Students will have 10 minutes to set up and present their sound designs. In the interest of time, students should preselect their favorite 3-5 sounds cues to present to the class, but the full show must be functional as the Instructor may request specific cues be played. For their favorite sound cues, students are encouraged to present sound cues they had some hand in creating or editing, or music moments they believe are particularly powerful.

Required Elements: Sound Cue Sheet, Sound Cues organized by scene and cue number, Full Preshow/Intermission Cues, Bundled QLab file.

Class Schedule

Week 1

- T 1/26 Introductions, course objectives, and going over the syllabus.
R 1/28 The Science of Sound

Week 2

- T 2/2 The Art of Sound and Design
R 2/4 The History of Sound Design
Assignment: Read *The Glass Menagerie*

Week 3

- T 2/9 Sound Design and Audio Engineering
Assignment: Read Ch 4 - QLab and Audio Basics
R 2/11 Elements of a Sound Board and Live Mixing a Musical
Assignment: Prep a Live Mix Project

Week 4

- T 2/16 Audio Equipment
*** Due: Discuss Ch 4 - QLab and Audio Basics**
R 2/18 Audio Editing 101
Assignment: Preshow Announcement

Week 5

- T 2/23 Prep a Live Mix Work Day
Assignment: Read Ch 5 - Setting Up QLab with Your Audio System
R 2/25 Reinforcing an Orchestra
Assignment: *On the Horizon* Response Paper
*** Due: Prep a Live Mix Project**

Week 6

- T 3/2 Music as a Design Tool
Assignment: Score a Short Project
*** Due: *On the Horizon* Response Paper**
R 3/4 How to Craft the Soundscape
Assignment: Sound Design Project 1 (*The Glass Menagerie*)
*** Due: Preshow Announcement**

Week 7

- T 3/9 Adobe Editing Suite and Other Softwares
R 3/11 Realism in Sound Design and Building your SFX Library

Week 8

- T 3/16 Prepping Your Audio System
Assignment: Read *The 39 Steps*
Read Ch 6 - Audio Cues
- * **Due: Score a Short Project**
Discuss Ch 5 - Setting Up QLab with Your Audio System
Discuss *The Glass Menagerie* (Time Permitting)
- R 3/18 No Class

Week 9

- T 3/23 Foley Art in Sound Design
Assignment: Foley *Spamalot* Project
- * **Due: Sound Design Project 1 (*The Glass Menagerie*)**
- R 3/25 Getting Creative: The Never-Ending Quest of Sound Sampling
Assignment: *Facing Our Truth* Response Paper
Sound Design Project 2 (*The 39 Steps*) FINAL PROJECT
Read Ch 8 - Fade Cues
- * **Due: Discuss Ch 6 - Audio Cues**

Week 10

- T 3/30 Experimental Sound Design: Paving the Way to New Mediums
Assignment: Experimental Sound Project
- * **Due: *Facing Our Truth* Response Paper**
- R 4/1 Video 101 in QLab
Assignment: Read Ch 9 - Control Cues
Read Ch 10 - Group Cues
- * **Due: Discuss Ch 8 - Fade Cues**

Week 11

- T 4/6 Foley and Experimental Project Work Day
- R 4/8 Creating a World Within QLab
- * **Due: Foley *Spamalot* Project**
Discuss Ch 9 - Control Cues
Discuss Ch 10 - Group Cues

Week 12

- T 4/13 Video Mapping and Other Advanced Techniques in QLab
- R 4/15 Video Map Obstacle Course

Week 13

- T 4/20 OSC and Scripting: Getting QLab to Communicate
- R 4/22 Troubelshooting Sound: What to Do When the Music Stops
Assignment: *Songs for a New World* Response Paper

Week 14

T 4/27 Final Project Work Week

* **Due: *Songs for a New World* Response Paper**

R 4/29 Final Project Work Week

Finals: Present Final Projects Tuesday, May 4 at 2:15 pm in Fisher Theatre

Iowa State University Policies

The following policies are universal of all Iowa State University courses and must be abided by at all times.

Academic Dishonesty

The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic dishonesty. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

Accessibility Statement

Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. Students requesting accommodations for a documented disability are required to work directly with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes before accommodations will be identified. After eligibility is established, SAS staff will create and issue a Notification Letter for each course listing approved reasonable accommodations. This document will be made available to the student and instructor either electronically or in hard-copy every semester. Students and instructors are encouraged to review contents of the Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible to identify a specific, timely plan to deliver/receive the indicated accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are not retroactive in nature and are not intended to be an unfair advantage.

Prep Week

This class follows the Iowa State University Prep Week policy as noted in section 10.6.4 of the Faculty Handbook.

Discrimination and Harassment

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Veteran.

Religious Accommodation

Iowa State University welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course. For students, you should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your professor at the earliest possible time.

Academic Freedom

Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged.

Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

COVID-19 health and safety requirements

Students are responsible for abiding by the university's COVID-19 health and safety expectations. All students attending this class in-person are required to follow university policy regarding health, safety, and face coverings:

1. Wear a cloth face covering in all university classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other in-person instructional settings and learning spaces. Cloth face coverings are additionally required to be worn indoors in all university buildings, and outdoors when other people are or may be present where physical distancing of at least 6 feet from others is not possible. Students with a documented health or medical condition that prevents them from wearing a cloth face covering should consult with Student Accessibility Services in the Dean of Students Office.
2. Ensure that the cloth face covering completely covers the nose and mouth and fits snugly against the side of the face.
3. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible.
4. Assist in maintaining a clean and sanitary environment.
5. Not attend class if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
6. Not attend class if you have been told to self-isolate or quarantine by a health official.
7. Follow the instructor's guidance with respect to these requirements. Failure to comply constitutes disruptive classroom conduct. Faculty and teaching assistants have the authority to deny a non-compliant student entry into a classroom, laboratory, studio, conference room, office, or other learning space.

These requirements extend outside of scheduled class time, including coursework in laboratories, studios, and other learning spaces, and to field trips. These requirements may be revised by the university at any time during the semester.

In accordance with university policy, instructors may use a face shield while they are teaching as long as they are able to maintain 8 feet of physical distance between themselves and students during the entire instructional period. Some form of face covering must be worn at all times in learning spaces regardless of the amount of physical distancing.

Faculty may refer matters of non-compliance to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action, which can include restrictions on access to, or use of, university facilities; removal from university housing; required transition to remote-only instruction; involuntary disenrollment from one or more in-person courses; and other such measures as necessary to promote the health and safety of campus.

It is important for students to recognize their responsibility in promoting the health and safety of the Iowa State University community, through actions both on- and off-campus.

The university's faculty asks that you personally demonstrate a commitment to our Cyclones Care campaign. Iowa State University's faculty support the Cyclones Care campaign and ask you personally to demonstrate a commitment to our campaign.

Your dedication and contribution to the campaign will also protect your family, classmates, and friends, as well as their friends and families. Our best opportunity for a successful fall semester with in-person learning and extramural activities requires all of us to collaborate and fully participate in the Cyclones Care campaign.