

THESIS GUIDELINES

GRADUATE DESIGN THESIS GUIDELINES

The Graduate Design Thesis is a fully documented presentation of designs for the sound, scenery, costumes or lighting (and, with special permission of advisors and having completed the relevant prerequisite classes, a combination of two design areas) a specific play, musical or opera or film. The Thesis may also be a combination of projects. Students and advisors will discuss the merits of a produced vs. theoretical or combination thesis as pertains to the student's learning and portfolio goals. Advisors will inform students as to the outcome of this discussion late in the spring of the second year or early in the fall of the third year of graduate study.

The Thesis Project may be developed with a singular or major/minor emphasis combining two of the four areas of stage design: scenery, costumes, sound or lighting, subject to advisor approval, class prerequisites and the following guidelines:

THESIS PROJECT DETERMINATION

The Design Thesis Candidate will meet with faculty advisors to determine the composition of student's thesis project: produced and/or theoretical and genre of pieces that would be appropriate. Choices will be made by taking the following factors into consideration:

1. Contents of the student's portfolio.
2. Areas of strength and weakness in student process.
3. Gaps in student portfolio in genre, venue or subject matter.
4. Educational value.
5. Collaborative value.

THESIS PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Text: The choice of material (play/opera/films/musical(s)) by proposal, production assignment or both is subject to the approval of the student's thesis advisor(s). The dramatic stature of the material should be of sufficient scale and universality to allow adequate latitude for an original design approach and productions scheme, and is subject to the approval of the student's design advisors(s).

Facility: Since the designs are to be planned for a specific facility, the choice of the facility should be in keeping with the scale and type of proposed production(s).

Presentation: The Thesis Project (either theoretical or produced or both) should be presented as an organized portfolio of research, sketches (for each project), drawings, paintings, models and written materials that accompany the proposed production and that fulfill the requirements of each respective area of design. Costume majors will also be required to submit research and design bibles.

THEORETICAL THESIS PROJECT PROPOSALS

If the Thesis Project is to include a *theoretical* (un-produced) project, the Design Thesis candidate will submit three individual Thesis Project Proposals at a deadline to be determined by advisors. The Faculty's final determination of any student's theoretical Thesis Project selection will be made as quickly as possible upon receipt of the proposal. Each one-page typed proposal must include the following statements:

1. Identification of the text/libretto, the playwright/librettist-composer and the date of first publication/performance.
2. Aesthetic stature and appeal to contemporary audiences of the proposed production.
3. Rationale for selection: a case for a potentially successful production of the text/libretto.
4. Specific design challenges provided to the candidate by the proposed text/libretto.

PRODUCED / THEORETICAL THESIS PROJECT STATEMENT

Theoretical Thesis Project Statement

If the Thesis Project is to include a *theoretical* project, the Thesis Project Statement (the written portion of the Design Thesis project) is a certification of project fulfillment and must contain a detailed discussion and analysis of the play/opera/musical/film as well as a complete description of the proposed pre-production process. Parts of the project statement will be written during the design process and portions will be reflections on the process and product. Thesis students will work with advisors in areas outside of their focus to determine the degree of depth to explore in those secondary areas, both in writing and during the design process.

Components of the Statement must include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Proposed play/opera/musical/film:
 - A. Rationalization for potential of the proposed material as successful fulfillment of thesis requirements;
 - B. Stature and appeal to contemporary audiences;
 - C. Personal statement of design challenge;
 - D. Fulfillment of project requirements.
2. Original and past productions:
 - A. Analysis of past productions and their respective designs;
 - B. Original rationale for production aesthetics and strategies;
 - C. Historical data.
3. Proposed production design:
 - A. Description of production facility, including creative and logistical challenges
 - B. Analysis of text requirements - locale, action, characters, mood, theme, style and plot structure.
4. Scene Design Approach:

- A. Description of the design approach (locale, period or lack thereof, style, mood and overall color/color progression)
 - B. Description of staging methodology, mechanics and rationale
 - C. Description of materials/techniques proposed to accomplish the scenic idea and production scheme.
5. Costume Design Approach
- A. Description of design idea beginning with an overview to the approach and its connection to the designer/audience/society.
 - B. Locale, period(s) or lack thereof
 - C. Style, mood and overall color/color progression
 - D. Description of individual character/costume progression.
 - E. Piece List (to be added after the completion of the design)
 - F. Description of specific materials/techniques relating to production style
 - G. Discussion of special requirements in construction, use of media, fabric modification/distressing, etc.
6. Lighting design concept:
- A. Description of basic lighting design idea (style, overall mood, scenic composition)
 - B. Description of the quality of lighting, in terms of color, movement, texture and development of progression
 - C. Discussion of the mechanics of the lighting concept, in terms of instrumentation and control
7. Sound design concept:
- A. Description of basic sound design idea - style, overall mood, sonic composition (music, atmosphere, effects, vocal amplification or alteration).
 - B. Description of the quality of sound in terms of texture (timbre),rhythm, spatial (location), and development over time (melody);
 - C. Discussion of the mechanics of the delivery method, in terms of equipment and control.

Produced Thesis Project Statement

If the Thesis Project is to include a *produced* production, the Thesis Project Statement (the written portion of the Design Thesis project) is a certification of that production's realization and must contain a detailed discussion and analysis of the play/opera/musical as well as a complete description of the pre-production and production process. Parts of the project statement will be written during the design process and portions will be reflections on the process, the collaboration and the product.

Components of the Statement must include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Produced play/opera/musical/film:
 - A. Rationale for potential of the material as successful fulfillment of thesis requirements
 - B. Stature and appeal to contemporary audiences

- C. Personal statement of design challenge and why the production is important for the student to do morally, socially, politically and personally
 - D. Fulfillment of project requirements.
2. Original and past productions:
 - A. Analysis of past productions and their respective designs
 - B. Original rationale for production aesthetics and strategies
 - C. Historical data.
 3. Produced production design:
 - A. Description of production facility, including creative and logistical challenges
 - B. Analysis of text requirements - locale, action, characters, mood, theme, style and plot structure
 4. Scene Design Approach (including a critical response to collaborator's choices if not in area of thesis student's focus):
 - A. Description of basic design idea (locale, period, style, mood and overall color/color progression)
 - B. Description of staging concept, mechanics and rationale
 - C. Description of materials/techniques proposed to accomplish the scenic idea and production scheme
 - D. Critical analysis of Scene Design as realized
 5. Costume Design Approach (including a critical response to collaborator's choices if not in area of thesis student's focus).
 - A. Description of design idea beginning with an overview to the approach and its connection to the designer/audience/society.
 - B. Locale, period(s) or lack thereof
 - C. style, mood and overall color/color progression
 - D. Description of individual character/costume progression.
 - E. Description of specific materials/techniques relating to production style
 - F. Discussion of special requirements in construction, use of media, fabric modification/distressing, etc
 - G. Critical analysis of Costume Design as realized.
 6. Lighting design approach (including a critical response to collaborator's choices if not in area of thesis student's focus):
 - A. Description of basic lighting design idea (style, overall mood, scenic composition)
 - B. Description of the quality of lighting, in terms of color, movement, texture and development of progression
 - C. Discussion of the mechanics of the lighting concept, in terms of instrumentation and control
 - D. Critical analysis of Lighting Design as realized
 7. Sound design concept (including a critical response to collaborator's choices if not in area of thesis student's focus):
 - A. Description of basic sound design idea - style, overall mood, sonic composition (music, atmosphere, effects, vocal amplification or alteration).

- B. Description of the quality of sound in terms of texture (timbre),rhythm, spatial (location), and development over time (melody);
- C. Discussion of the mechanics of the delivery method, in terms of equipment and control.
- D. Critical analysis of Sound Design as realized

THESIS PROJECT PRESENTATION

COSTUME DESIGN PRESENTATION (Produced and Theoretical)

1. Design approach statement of approximately 200 words
2. 50 completely swatched and painted costumes
3. Built costume(s) or costume piece(s) as assigned (by advisors)
4. Detailed Scene/Character chart
5. Scenic Design required in presentation
 - A. Sense of Place collage
 - B. Section in research notebook devoted to location period and mood as they pertain to physical environment.
 - C. Scene Breakdown including: locations, props, characters, themes
6. Lighting Design required in presentation
 - A. Sense of Light collage
 - B. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, time-of-day and environment
 - C. specifics of angle, color, quality and key light
7. Sound Design required in presentation
 - A. Non Musical Play
 1. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 2. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, environment, rhythm, time-of-day, and required elements (i.e. sonic elements specifically mentioned in the script)
 3. concept disc of aural material including music and or effects with notations discussion annotated with the relevant characteristics of each track and source/copyright information.
 - B. Musical
 1. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 2. scene-by-scene breakdown of cast and characters(singing, speaking and silent)
 3. VCA cue sheets per scene/song
 4. orchestra breakdown
 5. required sonic elements (effects cues)
8. Research Bibles
 - A. Historical and modern research as appropriate to project-mostly visual but written as well
 - B. Character and body type research- visual
 - C. Research inspiration pertaining to sound, lighting and scenery
9. Detailed Design Bibles:
 - E. Reduced sketches for 10 costumes

- F. Piece List for 10 costumes
- G. Budget breakdown for 10 costumes (using a form specified by the Costume Shop manager)
- H. Swatch modifications (dying, painting, distressing, appliqué etc...)
- I. Spec sheets
- J. Research (any not included in the research bible)

Note: In conjunction with the Design and Construction advisors, costume students may craft the Thesis components to include a *theoretical portion* if the realized production is less than 50 costumes or of such a nature that the student would benefit from an additional production in the portfolio. Re-designing a realized production in a more idealized fashion (i.e. no limits on labor and budget) is also possible.

LIGHTING DESIGN PRESENTATION (Produced and Theoretical)

1. Lighting Design materials required for thesis, to be presented in a production notebook:
 - A. Design approach statement of approximately 200 words
 - B. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, time-of-day and environment, with specifics of angle, color, quality and key light
 - C. ground plan of principal setting, divided into acting/lighting areas
 - D. working sections showing beam-spread or field-spreads of instrumentation, used from all hanging positions (1/4" or 1/2" scale)
 - E. drafted light plot (1/4" or 1/2" scale)
 - F. instrument schedule
 - G. channel hook-ups
 - H. magic sheets
 - I. cue synopsis, using the following format:

1. Cue Count	Point of Execution	Visual Description
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 - J. follow spot cue sheet (if applicable)
 - K. color key
 - L. lighting storyboard showing one composition moment for each setting
 - M. complete shop order for rental of all equipment for producing the design in a standard rental house
 - N. if projections are employed, include:
 1. design and sequence of all artwork
 2. specifications of projection equipment
 3. slice specifications and distortion connection diagrams
 4. moving effects
2. Scenic Design materials required in presentation
 - A. Sense of Place collage
 - B. Section in research notebook devoted to location period and mood as they pertain to physical environment.
 - C. Scene Breakdown including: locations, props, characters, themes

- Non-Produced projects will also require:
- D. 1/2" Composite Groundplan and Section
 - E. Sketches of each scene to be included in Lighting Storyboard
3. Costume Design materials required in presentation:
 1. costume color plot or swatches for all major characters
 2. character descriptions or sketches of all major characters
 3. research notebook including material on character and period
 4. Sound Design materials required in presentation:
 - A. Non-Musical Play
 1. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 2. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, environment, rhythm, time-of-day, and required elements (i.e. sonic elements specifically mentioned in the script)
 3. concept disc of aural material including music and or effects with notations discussion annotated with the relevant characteristics of each track and source/copyright information.
 - B. Musical
 1. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 2. scene-by-scene breakdown of cast and characters(singing, speaking and silent)
 3. VCA cue sheets per scene/song⁴) orchestra breakdown
 4. required sonic elements (effects cues)

SCENERY DESIGN PRESENTATION (both produced and theoretical)

Scenic Design materials required in presentation for both theoretical and produced Thesis Projects (with exceptions as noted):

- A. Design approach statement of approximately 200 words
- B. colored rendering of principal set – 1/4" or 1/2" scale (see advisor)
- C. 1/8" or larger scaled colored storyboard which must include a specific lighting composition of remaining settings
- D. 1/4" and 1/2" composite ground plan showing:
- E. all scenes (with principal set on stage)
- F. sightlines
- G. shift-and-storage plan
- H. 1/4" and 1/2" scale composite section showing:
- I. all scenes (with principal set on stage)
- J. sightlines
- K. shift-and-storage plan
- L. hanging plot
- M. 1/4" or 1/2" scale color model demonstrating all scenes
- N. 1/2" drafted elevations and deck plan for all settings
- O. 1/2" painter's elevations for all settings
- P. properties information, including:
- Q. research notebook covering all aspects of the design

- R. complete draftings and paint elevations for all built units
 - S. all additional color/fabric information
 - T. if projections are employed, include:
 - U. design and sequence of all artwork
 - V. specifications of projection equipment
 - W. slice specifications and distortion connection diagrams
 - X. moving effects
 - Y. Production Book containing above materials as well as calendars, correspondence, etc...for produced work
 - Z. Costume Design materials required in presentation:
 - a. full research for each major costume
 - b. swatches for fabric type and color
 - c. four to six fully rendered costume designs for theoretical projects
 - d. research notebook including material on character and period
1. Lighting Design materials required in presentation:
 - A. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, time-of-day and environment
 - B. specifics of angle, color, quality and key light
 - C. lighting storyboard showing one compositional moment for each scene (fully researched lighting in terms of photos, paintings, etc.), may incorporate Scenic Storyboard, particularly in produced work
 2. Sound Design materials required in presentation:
 - A. Non Musical Play
 1. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 2. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, environment, rhythm, time-of-day, and required elements (i.e. sonic elements specifically mentioned in the script)
 3. concept disc of aural material including music and or effects with notations discussion annotated with the relevant characteristics of each track and source/copyright information.
 - B. Musical
 1. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 2. scene-by-scene breakdown of cast and characters(singing, speaking and silent)
 3. VCA cue sheets per scene/song4) orchestra breakdown5)
 4. required sonic elements (effects cues)

Sound Design Presentation (both produced and theoretical)

Sound Design materials required in presentation (with exceptions as noted):

1. Design approach statement of approximately 200 words
2. Drafted speaker plot including ground plan and sections of principle setting(s) and audience chamber showing placement of speakers and microphones (1/4 or 1/2 scale).

3. ground plan and sections showing fields and coverage of speaker systems (1/4 or 1/2 scale)
4. equipment breakdown with cut sheets
5. signal flow and/or block diagrams per system (storage, control, delivery)
6. patch information including cabling and harnesses

For Non-Musical show add :

7. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, environment, rhythm, time-of-day, and required elements (i.e. sonic elements specifically mentioned in the script)
8. cue sheets detailing placement in script, delivery, location (speaker assignments) description of cue and annotated sources/copyright information.
9. concept disc of aural material including music and or effects with notations discussion relevant characteristics of each track and annotated source/copyright information.
10. fully realized sound score

For Musical add :

1. complete shop order for renting equipment
2. microphone tracking sheets
3. VCA cue sheets including effects, orchestra and microphones• orchestra breakdown with pit plot, mic list, stand type

1. Scenic Design materials required in presentation:
 - a. 1/4" scale ground plan for each setting (non-realized)
 - b. 1/4" scale composite ground plan (non-realized)
 - c. 1/4" scale composite section (non-realized)
 - d. visual research regarding all aspects of physical environment
 - e. Sense of Place collage
2. Costume Design materials required in presentation:
 - a. costume color plot or swatches for all major characters
 - b. character descriptions or sketches of all major characters
 - c. visual research regarding all aspects of costume, including character, period, etc...
3. Lighting Design materials required in presentation:
 - a. concept statement of approximately 200 words
 - b. scene-by-scene analysis in terms of mood, time-of-day and environment
specifics of angle, color, quality and key light
 - c. lighting story board showing one compositional moment for each scene (fully researched lighting in terms of photos, paintings, etc.).

Review and modification of a double concentration Thesis Project will be made on a case-by-case basis. Thesis Students who's Thesis Projects are comprised of both Produced and Theoretical projects may alter requirements for the theoretical projects with discussion/approval of advisor.