

ARTT 252B – Technical Theater I: Stagecraft Tools and Techniques

Meeting time: Thursdays 1:10-4:00

Location: Hepburn Teaching Theater/Scene Shop

Required texts: *Supplied by instructor*

Course description:

This course is an introduction to the building blocks of technical theater production and will cover a wide range of topics in various technical disciplines. Through a combination of lectures, in-class demonstrations, and hands-on experience, students will gain a basic understanding of terminology, materials, techniques, personnel, and processes involved in Technical Production. Students will gain some proficiency with tools and technology that will be useful in both theatrical and non-theatrical environments.

Safety procedures will be covered early in the semester. **Adherence to shop safety policies is essential, and repeated disregard for these policies will not be tolerated and may be grounds for failure.**

Attendance and Participation:

Many of the skills that we will be developing during this class are hands-on and acquiring them effectively will require practice. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. Each student will be allowed one absence, and more absences will adversely affect the student's grade. As well as adversely affecting their grade, repeated absences will have a negative effect on the student's experience in the class. Please contact me in advance if you will be absent.

Class sessions will frequently involve the use of hand and power tools as well as working at heights on ladders, catwalks, and lifts. **Proper work attire is essential to the effective and safe use of class time. Close-fitting work clothing and sturdy, closed-toed shoes are required. Clothing should be durable and may get stained or damaged, so please choose your attire with that in mind. Long hair must be tied back, and please avoid wearing jewelry.**

Projects and Assignments:Practical Hands-on Projects and Shop Work

There will be several practical projects that are intended to allow the student to use the skills covered in class. Some of these projects will be completed during class time, while others will require work outside of class, which will be scheduled in consultation with the instructor. Each project will focus on a different aspect of technical production. These projects will include:

- Scenery layout and rehearsal taping, during class
- General skills project, TBD
- Basic electrical wiring, during class
- Sound hands-on setup, class time TBD
- Work on the fall theater production, during class
- Rigging hands-on session, during class
- Carpentry project, outside of class
- Nine hours of shop work (at least three on electrics), outside of class

Production Assessment

Over the semester, we will see two productions by theater companies in Philadelphia (these productions are TBD, more information to follow). We will assess the technical elements in both productions, addressing the ways in which they added to or detracted from the presentation, themes, and storytelling of the productions. Following our viewing of the first production we will discuss the technical elements as a group, and this will serve as a guide for a written assessment of the second production. The written assessment is due by the end of finals and should be three to five pages in length. Please submit this assignment digitally, unless other arrangements are made with the instructor.

Quizzes

There will be two quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will be a combination of short answer and multiple choice questions and will include topics covered in the reading and lectures. Students will be allowed to use one 8.5"x 11" page of their own notes during the quizzes.

Grading:

Attendance and Participation – 40%

Practical hands-on projects – 25%

Quizzes – 20%

Reaction paper – 15%

On-campus performances:

- September 24: Performing Arts Series presents *Ill Doots*, concert and food trucks, Hepburn Teaching Theater, 6:15PM
- October 2: Performing Arts Series presents *Close Up*, music and dance performance, Hepburn Teaching Theater 7:00PM
- November 13-15 & 19-21: Theater Program Fall Production of *Sonnets for an Old Century*, theater performance, 7:30 PM Hepburn Teaching Theater (***REQUIRED***)
- December 10-13: Outside company rental, The Rock School, dance performance of *The Enchanted Nutcracker*, times TBD, tickets required, talk to Justin for details

Contact Information:

Justin McDaniel

Technical Director – Goodhart Hall

Office: 202D (adjacent to the Teaching Theater)

jmcdaniel@brynmawr.edu

O| 610-526-7566

M| 717-817-4381

Course Calendar (Subject to Change):

ARTT B252 Technical Theater 1: Stagecraft Tools and Techniques		
Course Calendar		
This calendar is subject to change. Please make sure to reference the "AS OF" date to make sure that you are working with the most recent version.		
AS OF: September 2, 2026		
Date	Topic(s)	Assignment(s)
3-Sep	Introductions, Syllabus, Shop safety, Tour of the spaces	Read sections 1.0 through 1.4
10-Sep	Production process, theater architecture, reading drawings, using the scale ruler	Read section 3.3
17-Sep	Lighting instrument types and function, how to hang and focus	Dimension drawings for taping project
24-Sep	Ill Doots preview Lighting power and control, Hand and small power tools overview	Read sections 2.1 and 2.2
1-Oct	Close Up preview Tool practice 1	Reading assignment TBA
8-Oct	Taping/Layout project, Quiz #1, Tool practice 2	Read sections 2.3-2.6
15-Oct	Fall Break	
22-Oct	Construction materials and techniques	Read sections 2.8-2.10
29-Oct	Theater production work	
5-Nov	Theater production work	Read sections 3.1 and 3.2
12-Nov	Electricity and wiring project	Reading assignment TBA
19-Nov	Rigging and knots	Reading assignment TBA
26-Nov	Thanksgiving	
3-Dec	Sound system basics, equipment, and Qlab	
10-Dec	Rigging hands-on, Sound hands-on Quiz #2	

Accommodations and access:

Bryn Mawr College is committed to providing equal access to students with a documented disability. Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first speak with Access Services. Students can email accessservices@brynmawr.edu to request an appointment to begin this confidential process. If eligible for accommodations as per Access Services, students should schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible to share their verification form and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement. More information can be obtained at the Access Services website. (<http://www.brynmawr.edu/access-services/>)

Because some students with a disability may be eligible to record lectures - and it is state law in Pennsylvania that individuals are given advance notice that they may be recorded - professors also need to include the following statement in their syllabus:

Any student who has a disability-related need to record this class must first be found eligible to do so by Access Services and must share this eligibility with me, the instructor. Class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

The name of the individual having permission to record will not be revealed to the rest of the class.

Sourced from the Bryn Mawr College website: <https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/access-services/faculty/sample-syllabus-statement-accessibility>

Notice of Nondiscrimination:

Bryn Mawr College is committed to providing an educational and employment environment free from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The College does not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission on the basis of actual or perceived age, citizenship status, color, disability, gender identity/expression, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy or related conditions, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

This commitment is in accordance with federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

If you experience or witness discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual misconduct, or retaliation, you can make a report using the online reporting form or by contacting Cary Carr directly. Please note that, with the exception of roles on campus considered confidential resources (e.g., healthcare practitioners, therapists, and chaplains), all employees are mandatory reporters and are required by Bryn Mawr policy to make a report when they witness or learn of incidents of

discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual misconduct. Employees of the College are required to complete annual training, which covers these and other topics

Sourced from the Bryn Mawr College website: <https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/civil-rights-title-ix/policies-inquiries>

Sourced from the Bryn Mawr College website: <https://www.brynmawr.edu/news/new-interim-policy-prevention-discrimination>

Artificial Intelligence Policy:

Students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2) on assignments in this course. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools.

Care and kindness:

It is important to me that you have the resources you need to be able to focus on learning in this course – this includes your mental health and well-being, taking care of your day-to-day needs, and the necessary academic materials. Please contact <https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/health-wellness-center> for support.

On any given day, we are all likely to experience a range of emotional discomfort, which can be unsettling. We know that unexpected change can bring up many emotions such as sadness, anxiety, frustration, fear, loneliness and grief. If you are feeling any of these emotions, please know that I may be as well, and that is normal.

Counseling services are a part of the Health Wellness Center <https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/health-wellness-center/counseling-services> and they are committed to providing care to Bryn Mawr's student body.