



WACO, TEXAS

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**COURSE SYLLABUS  
AND  
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**STAGECRAFT I  
DRAM 1330 01**

**Christopher Cole**

**NOTE: This is a 16 week course**

**McLennan**  
*theatre*

**Course Description:**

Study and application of the methods and components of theatrical production which includes: theatre performance spaces theatrical management, basic tools and set construction, basic scenic, lighting, sound and properties design and construction; participation on departmental production crews and in the production scene shop is required. Required of theater majors. Semester Hours 3 (3 lec/3 lab)

*“It takes skill to bring something you’ve imagined into the world; to use words to create believable lives, to select the colors and textures of paint to represent a haystack at sunset, to combine ingredients to make a flavorful dish. No one is born with that skill. It is developed through exercise, through repetition, through a blend of learning and reflection that’s both painstaking and rewarding. And it takes time.”*

~Twyla Tharp

**Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:**

None

**Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:**

Closed-toed shoes REQUIRED. Toe shoes or ballet flats are not considered acceptable closed-toed shoes. Excessively bagging clothing should be avoided when working in the shop. Jewelry of any kind should not be worn in the shop. Be prepared to change clothes or remove jewelry **before class or shop hours**. Small lockers are available to store bags, clothing while in shop hours. You may provide your own lock for your locker if you so choose, but the code or extra key must be given to Professor Cole. Failing to do so may result in your lock being cut off the locker.

**A Note on Content**

**Theatre, historically and currently, deals with complex and controversial issues; it is often challenging and at times uncomfortable. It would therefore be impossible to offer a meaningful introduction to theatre that did not engage, at times, with potentially difficult issues including religion, gender, race, sexuality, class, violence and politics. Many of us will have different responses to the plays we read and attend, and that is an excellent thing; in our discussions, all thoughtfully and respectfully expressed viewpoints are welcome and encouraged. However, no one may be excused from reading, viewing, or discussing a play based on its content. Students who are concerned about the content of this class or their ability to complete the required work should talk to me.**

**A Note about respect**

**In this class, we will engage in discussion about theatrical productions, current events, historical views about race, sex, religion. As we engage in discussion remember that we are not always going to agree on a subject but that it is crucial that we remain respectful of others views even if we disagree. I will allow discussion and at times that may lead to CIVIL discourse. I will not tolerate disrespect of your fellow students or myself. If I find your comments to be disrespectful I will warn you, second you will be removed from class for the day, if it happens again or if I find your level of disrespect to be severe I will remove you from class and you will receive an F in the course. If you cannot articulate your thoughts in a respectful manner then it is probably best you keep those thoughts and comments to yourself.**

**"But I just HAVE to get an A! ... Or a C!"**

Many students want an A because it reflects a high level of academic competence and accomplishment; it means you put a lot of work into mastering the material of the class. However, some students are subject to external pressures brought on by student visas, scholarships, requirements for a major, academic probation, or graduation, and desperately “need” to achieve a certain grade. The onus for receiving the grade you need is on you, the student who earns it. YOU determine what your grade will be (not me) based on your performance over the course of the semester and the work you put into the class. If there’s a lot riding on your grade, start working NOW to achieve the grade you want. Pay attention in class and avoid distractions, do your homework, take notes (beyond just what’s written on the slides), regularly review your notes, form a study group, start studying for tests early rather than procrastinating, begin your assignments early and put effort into them, and feel free to come see me in office hours or schedule an appointment if need any help or if you just want to make sure you’re on the right track. At the end of every semester, panicked students contact me when there is frankly nothing I can do about their grade, because the student already earned that grade based on their performance over the course of the semester. Not only is it unfair to your peers to ask for special consideration at the end of the semester, it’s also unnecessary if you’ve been proactive about your work and grades throughout the course. If you contact me at the end of the semester to ask for any sort of change to your grade, I will not answer your email except to cut and paste this paragraph into my reply.

**Communicating via E-mail:**

**All Emails about class work or absences should be sent from your MCC email account. I will not open emails that do not come from a university account.**

Please check your e-mail and your eCampus page frequently. These will be my primary modes of communication with you. Although e-mail is often used informally, you should observe the basics of written communication in professional emails.

To receive a response from me, I urge you to do the following:

- 1) Use a greeting [Dear Professor Cole],
- 2) Write in complete sentences.
- 3) **Always** sign your name and section number at the bottom of your message. I cannot always decipher your name from your email address.

**I will not respond to emails asking for information already provided in the syllabus.** If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours AND you have read the syllabus carefully and cannot find an answer, please re-send your email. I do not typically check or respond to email over the weekend or during university holidays.

**Communicating via Office Hours:** I hold weekly office hours and take appointments (this is usually best), I encourage you to come in and introduce yourself. Use this time to raise any concerns, questions, or ideas you have about the class. Do come see me!

### **Instructor Information:**

Instructor Name: Christopher Cole  
MCC E-mail: ccole@mclennan.edu  
Office Phone Number: 254-299-8118  
Office Location: MTA 105C  
Office/Teacher Conference Hours: W 10-1 and by appointment  
Cell phone Number: 254-592-4213 (You can text this number.)

### **Required Text & Materials:**

Title: Stagecraft Fundamentals  
Author: Carver, Rita Kogler  
Edition: 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Publisher: Focal Press  
ISBN: 978-0-240-82051-4

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Title: The Backstage Handbook: An Illustration Almanac of  
Technical Information  
Author: Carter, Paul, George Chiang,  
Edition: 3rd  
Publisher: Broadway Press  
ISBN: 0-911747-39-7

**MCC Bookstore Website:** <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

**Shop Materials:**

Safety glasses/goggles (OSHA/ANSI Approved should be noted on the package)

Earplugs

Face/Dust mask

Work Gloves (optional, but strongly recommended)

All of these items are available for your use already in the shop, but it is recommended that you acquire your own so that you do not have to share and so that you get safety gear that you are comfortable wearing (some of the stuff in the shop is getting old and is uncomfortable).

**Student Support/Resources:**

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources, we encourage you to contact a success coach by calling (254) 299-8226. Students can visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. to meet with a success coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) is open 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, without an appointment. The Completion Center and pantry are located on the Second Floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

**Minimum Technical Skills:**

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

**Backup Plan for Technology:**

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be contacted/notified through your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

\* [Click Here for the Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace](http://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements)  
([www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements](http://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements))

Click on the link above for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

**Methods of Teaching and Learning:**

Completion of all required reading and completion of all quizzes, exams, skill tests, projects, and other activities. Each student is required to fulfill their minimum 2 production crew hours per week for theatre department productions. Class discussion will be used as a forum for students to share ideas and insights into the nature of their exploration of theatre. Assigned readings will supplement the student's knowledge of the practices of stagecraft. Discussions, quizzes, tests, play reviews, graded written assignments, and PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE will be a measure of student progress.

**Course Objectives and/or Competencies:**

Understanding of the general principles of the planning, preparation, and organization of the technical aspects of theatrical presentation. Mastering of the fundamentals of specialized technology and theory as it applies to the theatre, including color, electricity, acoustics, and design theory. Developing fundamental skills in representing technical ideas through sketching, drafting, and model-making

To identify common scene shop tools, as well as their proper use and safety concerns.  
To create, interpret, and utilize theatrical construction drafting.  
To function within a crew to reach the common goal of a completed production.  
To identify and properly operate equipment used for theatrical lighting and sound.  
To operate in a backstage performance environment with professionalism and efficiency.

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*"We have to experiment endlessly until our work is as nearly perfect as we can make it, until we are, so to speak, released from it. All is a part of our apprenticeship."*

-Robert Edmond Jones, The Dramatic Imagination

### **Course Outline and Schedule:**

Schedule subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Students will be notified in class and changes will be posted on Brightspace.

Date	Date	Tuesday	Due Tuesday	Thursday	Due Thursday
Jan 14/15	Wk 1	Introduction & Knots		Safety FIRST!	
Jan 21/23	Wk 2	Tool & Materials		Tools and Materials	
Jan 28/30	Wk 3	How to read drafting.		Production Techniques	
Feb 4/6	Wk 4	Production Techniques		Skill Building	Skills Test
Feb 11/13	Wk 5	Lighting Tools and Equipment.		Lighting Tools and Equipment	
Feb 18/20	Wk 6	Rope, Tape & Cable		Skill Building	
Feb 25/27	Wk 7	Skill Building		Skill Building	
Mar 3/5	Wk 8	Discuss 1 <sup>st</sup> Show	Production Response	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam
Mar 10/13 SB	Wk 9	Props		Fly System	
Mar 17/19	Wk 10	Stage and Equipment		Electricity	
Mar 24/26	Wk 11	Electricity		Color Theory	
Mar 31/ Apr 2	Wk 12	Working in theatre/ Hierarchy		Scenic Painting	
Apr 7/9	Wk 13	The Ear and Hearing		Sound and Sound Creation	
Apr 14/16	Wk 14	Skill Building		Skill Building	
Apr 21/23	Wk 15	Skill Building		Skill Building	
Apr 28/30		Discuss 2 <sup>nd</sup> Show	Production Response	Final Review	

### **Course Grading Information:**

- **BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE:**
  - Shop Production Hours (3 hrs wk) 300
  - Production Response (2 100ea) 200
  - Practical Mid Term Exam 150

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▪ Practical/ Written Final Exam	150
▪ Class Participation	100
▪ Attendance	100
▪ <b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

○ **GRADING SCALE:**

▪ 900 - 1000	=	A
▪ 800 - 899	=	B
▪ 700 - 799	=	C
▪ 600 - 699	=	D
▪ 0 - 599	=	

- The grade of A indicates achievement of outstanding quality.
- The grade of B indicates achievement of high quality.
- The grade of C indicates achievement of acceptable quality.
- The grade of D indicates achievement that is minimally passing, but at less than acceptable quality.
- The grade of F indicates that the student's work was not of passing quality

### **Scene Shop Lab Hours**

**Students will receive a “B” for lab/shop hours by coming in for 50 hours and average participation. Students must go above and beyond in shop hours to receive an “A” for lab hours. Hours beyond 65 hours will count as extra credit.** It is important that you come in when you say you will be in the shop, as projects will be planned around how many people are in the shop each day. You must sign up for a minimum of 2 hours per shift and work 3 hours each week. You may (and should) sign up for additional hours. **Failure to show up for shop without notice will result in the loss of hours and count as a class absence.** Do not wait until the last minute to do your shop hours! Lab hour cancellations will be announced in class, on Brightspace, and posted on the shop door. You are required to log your shop time via a log book. You must log in and out each day. Failure to log in, or logging in late, will result in hours not being counted. Failure to log out when you leave may result in lost hours, as you will be logged out at the instructor’s discretion.

### **Production Crew**

If you are a theatre major and on scholarship, you are required to be involved in EVERY production. If you are not cast for a show, you should talk to Professor Cole about being on crew for the production. You will not receive lab hours for being on crew as it is part of your scholarship. If you are not on scholarship, you may receive lab hours for participating on a show crew. The number of hours that you receive are at Professor Cole’s discretion.



**Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:****CLASS ATTENDANCE:**

**Absence Policy:** Due to the studio nature of this course, attendance is **mandatory** at all scheduled classes and scheduled lab sessions. Each student is allowed 2 unexcused absence FOR BOTH CLASS AND LAB for the semester. Absences in excess of that number will result in the student's final course grade being reduced by 50 points for each excessive absence (for explanation of point system, see Grading section).

**Excused Absences:** The student is responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the reason for absence. Excused absence documentation is due within one week of the last date of absence. Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the university are the following:

- Participation in an activity appearing on the university authorized activity list.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Injury or Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence.

**Disciplinary Absences:** If you are asked to leave the class for disciplinary reasons the removal from class will count as an unexcused absence. You will be asked to leave class if you are disruptive, inconsiderate or unprepared with required readings

**Tardiness Policy:** Tardiness will be penalized. Two tardies will equal one unexcused absence. You are tardy after roll is called at the beginning of class. A tardy of more than 15 minutes becomes an absence.

- Students are responsible for all information given in class (both spoken and written) and all assignments.
- Assignments distributed in class will be posted on eCampus as will any other pertinent course documents.
- If you are absent or tardy, you are responsible for contacting the instructor to find out what you missed and how to be prepared for the next class period.
- Please be courteous to your instructor and fellow students by arriving on time.
- Attendance will be taken at Lab and Strike. Strike attendance will be taken at the end of strike so if you leave early you will be counted as not present.

**As this is a theatre class, students should strive to be on time every day, as being late to rehearsals/shows is not tolerated in the professional world.** You will hear many times in your theatre career the phrase *“If you are on time, you are late.”*

Due to the project and participatory nature of this course, each assignment will have a different set of guidelines. Feel free to inquire about your grade standing at anytime.

Final semester grade will be based on improvement over the course of the semester, attendance, and whether or not you have met expectations appropriate to your understanding of Theatrical Production.

Fulfilling the written requirements of each creative project will earn a B, which the university defines as “Good”. The distance between a B and an A can be filled with creativity, ingenuity, and attention to detail.

### **Scenic & Lighting Shop Rules and Guidelines:**

1. Eye protection must be worn at all times in the scene shop.
2. Hearing protection should be used when you, or others around you, are using power tools (such as the table saw).
3. Long hair (men and women) must be tied back so it does not hang down in work area.
4. Horseplay, teasing, and non-professional attitudes will not be tolerated. You will be asked to leave shop and will receive zero hours for the day if you participate in such activities or attitudes.
5. Wear clothes that can get dirty. Long pants and sturdy closed-toed shoes with good tread (no sandals or pumps) should be worn in all shop areas. Scarves, necklaces and loose shirts are also potential hazards. You may want to keep a set of work clothes on hand to change into each day. The more of you that is covered, the safer you are. Your midriff should never be visible! Always assume we will be painting. Failure to wear appropriate clothing for shop will result in you being sent away or your clothes getting dirty, alternate assignments will **not** be found for you.
6. Food, drink, cell phone, headphone usage, or smoke breaks are not allowed.
7. Distractions such as loud music, rambunctious talking, and general lack of attention can result in serious injury and will not be allowed.
8. Materials and tools should never be thrown or dropped but respected and treated in a manner that does not prematurely shorten their life.
9. There are no stupid questions. **If you don't know how to properly use a tool or complete an assigned task, please ask.**
10. While a high standard of craftsmanship should always be striven for, mistakes will be made and are a vital part of the educational process and should be embraced in a positive spirit—and then fixed.
11. Any job you start needs to be put away and cleaned up at the end of your work period or passed on to another student. If your job is being passed on, be sure to leave enough time to adequately explain the task before you leave. Be sure to inform Professor Cole of who is taking over the task before you leave.

12. Everything in the shop has a home where it lives. If tools and other items are always put back in the same place, everyone will know where they are when needed.
13. Always check the settings on tools BEFORE you use them. If you change a setting to something unusual, change it back to its normal setting when you are done with it.
14. No tools, equipment, or props may be taken from the shop area for personal or other use. Requests from area theatres or faculty from other departments must go through faculty, not students.
15. It is customary to treat fellow workers with respect and care, supporting them when they are down, or when they are working in an area in which is new to them.
16. You are required to clock in and out when you enter/leave the shop for the day. Failure to do so will result in your hours for that day not being included.
17. You are expected to keep the hours that you will be in the shop up to date on the scheduling book.
18. Be sure to inform Professor Stroman when you leave or if you go somewhere else (such as the costume shop or restroom).
19. Be sure to know where the first aid kits are located as well as the fire extinguishers.

### **Cellphone Policy**

Cellphones must be silenced and put away before the class begins. Absolutely no texting is allowed during class. You will be given one warning about texting in class, after which, you will be asked to leave class. In class notes should be taken in a method other than on your cellphone.

Cellphones are also not allowed during shop hours. They should be placed in a locker as soon as you come into shop. This will keep you from being distracted by it and lessen the chance that something might happen to your phone. There are clocks in both the shop and the theatre for those who need to leave at certain times. Occasionally, we will have music playing in the shop/theatre during shop hours and cellphones may be used for this, but only one source of music should be playing at a time and it should be appropriate for the shop and not offensive to anyone. Again, headphones are not allowed in the shop. If music is found to be inappropriate/offensive, the music will be turned off for the remainder of the day and offending student will no longer be allowed to choose music for the semester.

### **Food and Drink Policy:**

*Absolutely no food or drink (even water in closed bottles) is allowed in the house of the theatre.* Only water in a closed bottle is allowed on the stage in the BPAC. Only water in a closed bottle is allowed in the scene shop in designated areas.

### **FACULTY RESEARCH STATEMENT**

In addition to being your instructor for this course, I am also an artist and a technician. It is because I have been an artist and technician in so many different and changing ways that I am able to be an effective instructor. My education has certainly qualified me to teach, but it is my experiences with the theatre that have given me something to say. In my experience I have found that expression through performance is inseparable from research, dealing both with intangible expression such as acting and design or physical expression, such as scenic elements on the stage. Every production I have participated in has been an experiment, and the results of those past shows affect each production I will attempt in the future. These experiments have been as ephemeral as presenting a concept through design and gauging audience interpretation, or as concrete as finding a way for actors to safely dance on an elevated platform. Each of these experiments has held a degree of risk, generally that risk is lost time and wasted materials. But the rewards of those risks are ingenuity, innovation and a better way to tell the audience a story.

**Student Behavioral Expectations and Conduct Policy:**

Active and relevant participation in classroom discussion is expected every day. Students are expected to be courteous to fellow students and respect their comments and questions.

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will have serious consequences and result in a failing grade.

\* **[Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement](#)**

([www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity))

The link above will provide you with information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

\* **[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](#)**

([www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies](http://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies))

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have guidelines specific to this course.

**Accommodations/ADA Statement**

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. Instructors should not provide accommodations unless approved by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit [mclennan.edu/disability](http://mclennan.edu/disability).

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

[disabilities@mclennan.edu](mailto:disabilities@mclennan.edu)

254-299-8122

Room 319, Student Services Center

**\* Click Here for more information about Title IX**

**([www.mclennan.edu/titleix](http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix))**

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@mclennan.edu](mailto:titleix@mclennan.edu) or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Vice President for Student Success) at 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC by calling 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students.

McLennan's Title IX webpage (<http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/>) contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence or domestic violence.

*\* You will need to access each link separately through your Web browser (for example: Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Chrome, or Safari) to print each link's information.*