

OVERVIEW OF THE IUSB THEATRE AND DANCE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION PROCESS.

GENERAL NOTES/GUIDELINES:

1. Listen carefully to what others have to say.
2. Stay open. A different idea might expand your understanding of the play.
3. Express interest in and enthusiasm for other people's ideas.
4. Make it your responsibility to be an advocate for the play.
5. All design meetings will be 1 hour 15 minutes long each week on a day set by the faculty and director. You will receive notification about production meetings from your SM. Should you be unavailable to attend the meeting you will notify your SM and your advisor via email prior to the meeting.
6. Directors and Designers should meet as frequently as necessary between the scheduled design meetings to ensure that director and designers are on the same page and making appropriate forward progress. If the SM isn't present at these meetings, the Director should make sure that significant developments in a design area are communicated in a timely manner to other members of the production team.
7. Note that this document is not intended to be comprehensive, but to give a general overview of the process, major deadlines, and check points. Complete details of expectations for each design area are available from the area advisor. Note that due dates for drawings, plots, etc. are approximate and may vary based on the specific calendar/build schedule and scale of the production.

Advisors by area:

Directing: Justin Amellio/Randy Colborn

Technical Direction/Lighting Design: Tim Hanson

Scenic Design/Props/Paint: Jen Kazmierczak

Costume Design: Jason Resler

Costume Craft/Construction: Aimee Cole

Sound Design:

Projection/Media Design:

Stage Management: Jason Resler

FIRST WEEK – Design Meeting: The Play’s Meaning and Significance

Goals:

1. Calendar Coordinator, Costume Shop Manager, and T.D. to review production calendar, budgets and labor, shop and other limitations with Production Team
2. Communicate your initial ideas and feelings about the script
3. Discover how others view the script
4. Build mutual enthusiasm for your work together

Preparation:

Designers and Director should come to the first meeting with a solid understanding of and appreciation for the text. Everyone should complete a basic script analysis, research any element of the play with which you are unfamiliar (vocabulary, historical events, etc.), and research the playwright. It can also be helpful to read criticisms of the play and look at production histories – particularly if you find it difficult to get a handle on the play.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. What did you like about the play?
2. How does this play relate to you?
3. Why is this play relevant/important to do?
4. What is the one thing you want the audience to take away from this production?
5. Who is this play about? What happens to them in the play?
6. Who are the secondary characters? How do they affect the major characters?
7. What is the play’s genre?
8. When and where does the play take place? (Is there more than one option here?)
9. Is this a real world or an expressive one?
10. What are the adjectives that you might use to describe this world?
11. What images, sounds, smells, and tastes do you imagine in this world?
12. Where were you confused and why?
13. What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of the play?

General Guidelines for this Meeting:

1. For this meeting forget the specifics (the necessities for real fire, six doors, a working elevator, a flown angel, etc.)
2. Don’t worry about how you’re going to make something happen. Enjoy the freedom of just discussing the big ideas of the play

SECOND WEEK – Design Meeting: The World of the Play

Goals:

1. Share evocative images and sounds related to the world of the play
2. Make definitive decisions about the visual and aural concept for the production

Preparation:

Directors and designers should review the notes from the first meeting. Directors should prepare a clear statement regarding basic given circumstances (where and when), action of the play (who's story is it and what's the journey), main idea, style/tone and concept. This should be based on the conversation at the first meeting and should embrace the ideas presented. This statement should be sent to designers and advisors four days in advance of the second meeting. Designers should respond (copying design team and advisors) with any questions or concerns they would like to discuss at the second meeting.

Designers should research time period and location for the play and be prepared to present evocative images and sounds for the world of the play. (These images and sounds are simply another way of presenting your thoughts. They can and should elicit questions. Only a small number of them will be embraced. These are the ones that help the group understand something deeper and more nuanced about the play, but all of them help the discussion. Sometimes you discover what something is by exploring what it is not. Bring opposing images and ask "is it this or that?") Directors are encouraged to bring images and sounds as well.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. What does this world look and feel like? What interesting details have popped up in your research that might be helpful to the group?
2. What economic classes are represented? What's the playwright's opinion of these economic classes?
3. What are the politics of this world? Who has the power? Do they use it for good or bad purposes? Does the playwright think they should be in power?
4. What are the social rules in this world? What wins approval from others? How do you need to act in order to win friends or gain power? Which characters flout the rules?
5. What are the ethical rules of this world? What's considered right or wrong?
6. Does religion play a role in this world? Is it used for good or evil?
7. Is this world masculine or feminine? Does it seem to belong to one of the characters or some group of characters?
8. How does each character fit into this world? How do they relate to one another?
9. What does this world sound like?
10. What does this world look like in terms of mass, line, color, texture, and movement?
11. What images does the playwright present in the text?

General Guidelines for this Meeting:

1. Embrace the decisions made at the first meeting
2. Consider how your research can be used to support the text and the concept
3. Look for images and sounds that work with the text
4. Be able to articulate the reasoning behind every choice
5. Don't expect enthusiasm for every idea, image, or sound
6. Celebrate anything that moves the conversation forward

THIRD WEEK – Design Meeting: Technical Demands of the Text / Visual Exploration of Ideas

Goals:

1. Talk through all scenes and transitions in detailed way.
2. Discuss current thoughts on design direction, making sure these are cohesive and on-track with text and concept
3. Designers to present thumbnail sketches, with the emphasis being on presenting a lot of options and ideas rather than spending a lot of energy to perfect and polish one or two ideas that might not prove to be the best answer to the needs of the production.

Preparation:

Designers and Director will re-read the play, paying particular attention to technical demands of the text. Detailed notes should be taken regarding the needs for set, props, costumes, lighting and sound.

Designers should do additional research for specific needs and create many rough thumbnail sketches (including a rough ground plan from Set Designer) that convey preliminary design ideas

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. When and where does each scene take place?
2. How does the play move from scene to scene? How were scene changes facilitated in the original production? What kind of pacing seems to be called for?
3. Which characters are in each scene? Are costume changes indicated or needed?
4. What are the specific lighting needs in each scene? What are the light sources? Are practicals called for?
5. What are the specific needs for sound?
6. How do you current design ideas address these needs?

General Guidelines for this Meeting:

1. Stay open to the possibility of new ideas. Be prepared to think outside of the box.
2. Be prepared to modify an idea that doesn't work. These roughs are just another way to move the conversation closer to your goal of an exciting and unified production.

FOURTH WEEK – Design Meeting: Preliminary Design Presentations

Goals:

1. **Preliminary Design Presentations** – to share specific design ideas through sketches, renderings, white models, and sound examples. Indication of color should begin to be introduced by the designers.
2. To discuss how each element of design supports the needs of the text and the concept.
3. To discuss how each element of design might potentially impact other elements of design and staging possibilities

Preparation:

Designer to provide visual and aural representations that help the team understand the visual shape of the work to come:

- **Set Designers** will prepare sketches, renderings, white model, etc. of the overall design, with sketches of different scenes, locations, major moments of the show and will provide a scale ground plan(s) as appropriate as well as presenting preliminary indications of color palette and texture of materials. A preliminary prop list will be provided by the prop master based on the text.
- **Costume Designers** will prepare rough sketches of the full design and/or research collages supporting their decisions with explanation/justification of the character choices as they fit into the direction chosen by the design team and present rough color palette ideas as well as thoughts about texture, fabrics, and other materials
- **Lighting Designer** will prepare sketches, renderings, collages, augmented research, model photographs, or other imagery that helps us understand the visual shape of the key moments of the play
- **Sound Designers** will prepare sound examples to help the team understand the aural shape of the work to come.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers should be prepared to discuss how specific design choices impact the needs of the text.
2. Designers and Director should talk through the play scene by scenes asking questions about how designs work and how they might impact staging and other elements of design. It is not important to come to definite conclusions about what should stay and what should go at this meeting. This is simply a time to ask questions and explore options.
3. Director should feel comfortable taking two to three days to absorb the information before responding to renderings, models, ground plans, and sound samples. Individual meetings with designers are recommended at this time to talk through what works and what doesn't.

General Guidelines for this Meeting:

1. Remain flexible and open to change. These are just preliminary ideas.

Logistics:

1. Following this meeting, Scenic and Costume Designers should meet with the T.D. and Costume Shop Manager to discuss the possible impact of budget, labor, and time constraints on design choices. T.D./C.S.M will communicate budgetary or resource concerns to the Designers and Directors so that such concerns may be taken into account in shaping final designs.

FIFTH WEEK – Design Meeting: Refinement of Designs

Goals:

1. Designers to visually/aurally present continued refinement of ideas presented at the last meeting and to share changes and additions to design elements.
2. To continue discussion of unity of elements and impact of one element on another.
3. To discuss budget and its possible impact on designs.

Preparation:

Designers should continue to refine design choices, meeting with director outside as needed. Materials presented this week should be fairly close to the level of completion expected for the Final Design Presentations the following week. T.D. and Costume Shop Manager continue to refine budgets based on evolving design ideas

- **Set Designers** will refine ideas presented at preliminary designs, introducing more specific color choices and continuing to evolve/refine the designs. Set Designer should present a preliminary color model or white model and color sketch(es), as well as basic scaled ground plan(s) and vertical section(s) of the set, including masking, playing and stored positions of all set pieces in the preparation for the preliminary fly meeting. Set designer should also provide individual sketches and reduced floor plans of each major scene as seen appropriate to the director and stage manager.
- **Costume Designers** will refine designs presented at preliminary presentations with more specific color choices and continuing to evolve/refine the designs. Costume designer should provide more refined color sketches or color renderings for the design of the show, with at least representative fabric swatches.
- **Lighting Designer** will refine sketches, renderings or other imagery that helps us understand the visual shape of the key moments of the play.
- **Sound Designers** will refine sound examples to help the team understand the aural shape of the work to come. Continue discussion about live sounds, live music, reinforcement of voices or other sound effects, etc.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers should be prepared to discuss how specific refined design choices impact the needs of the text.
2. Designers and Director should talk through the play scene by scenes asking questions about how refined designs work and how they might impact staging and other elements of design.

General Guidelines for this Meeting:

1. Remain flexible and open to change.

Checkpoint:

1. **Preliminary Fly Meeting:** In attendance Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Sound Designer, Media Designer (if appropriate), and Advisors (if available) to review the Set Designer's preliminary floor plan and vertical section and to start to understand and resolve three-dimensional spatial issues between scenery, lighting, sound, and media needs. Set Designer to follow-up with director on any tentative decisions made at this meeting that impacts the visual composition or spatial relationship of the setting.

SIXTH WEEK – Design Meeting: Final Design Presentations

Goals:

1. Final Design Presentations

Preparation:

Designers to provide final visual and aural representations of the designs based on previous weeks evolution and meetings, responding appropriately to reactions and requests of the director and other members of the design team.

- **Set Designers** will prepare a final color model or white model and color rendering(s), detailed scaled ground plan(s) and vertical section of the set, including masking, playing and stored positions of all set pieces. Set Designer should also provide individual sketches and reduced ground plans of each scene as appropriate and explanation of all scene changes. Set Designer and/or Prop Master will also prepare renderings or research for all major furniture and props pieces.
- **Costume Designers** will prepare full color renderings for the design of the show, including swatches where appropriate and prepare a visual representation of color palette and/or swatches for the Lighting Designer.
- **Lighting Designer** will prepare revised sketches, renderings or other imagery that helps us understand the visual shape of the key moments of the play.
- **Sound Designers** will prepare sound examples to help the team understand the aural shape of the work to come. Continue discussions about live sounds, live music, reinforcement of voices or other sound effects, etc.

Logistics:

1. Each Designer should receive a rehearsal schedule and plan on attending rehearsal as much as possible in order to avoid surprises. Designers and Prop Master should plan on attending multiple rehearsal of the work to understand how the space and prop s are being used, check for quick changes, new interpretations of characters, other special considerations, etc. Designers should discuss with their Advisor and Director how often attendance is appropriate

SEVENTH WEEK – Final Revisions of Designs

Checkpoints:

- **Final Budget Check** – By Monday of this week: T.D. and Costume Shop Manager should prepare final budgets. If the design is over-budget, a meeting should be held with appropriate tech area head, Designer and Director to talk through possible changes or adjustments
- **Second Fly Meeting** – In attendance: T.D., Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Sound Designer, Media Designer (if appropriate) to review the Set Designer's finalized ground plan and section view and to make any final adjustments necessary to resolve three-dimensional spatial issues between scenery, lighting, sound and media needs. Set Designer to follow-up with Director on any tentative decisions made at this meeting that impacts the visual composition or spatial relationship of the setting.
- **Preliminary Speaker Plot Due** – Discuss as part of Second Fly Meeting
- **Preliminary Microphone Plot Due** – If appropriate – share with Sound Advisor/T.D.
- **Final Scenic Design Drawing Due** – Set Designer will turn in by Friday of this week to the T. D. T. D. to set preliminary deadlines for specific drawings if necessary prior to this date. Typically no major/structural changes can occur to the set after this point.
- **Prop Meeting/Final Prop List Due** – In attendance: Director, Set Designer, SM, Prop Master, Scenic Advisor. This meeting should occur no later than this week to talk through the complete prop list in detail and determine what are prop items vs set or costume. Images that show intended product should be shown at this meeting.
- **Build/Priority List & Plan of Action** – Costume Designer will create Plan of Action for pulling and purchasing items, along with a Build/Priority List. This plan is to be approved by the Costume Shop Manager, Craft Supervisor, and Costume Advisor. Additionally the Costume Designer is to create a Costume Bible with all necessary information for completing the design.
- **Fabric Shopping** – Costume Designer to start Fabric Shopping – online and in person.
- **Measurements to be scheduled as soon as possible**

Preparation:

- Make sure you have all appropriate paper work prepared for the above meetings.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers should share any updates as a result of this weeks meetings.

EIGHTH WEEK – Shop Manager Prep Week

Checkpoints:

- T. D. and Costume Shop Manager – should use this week to prep for build that begins the following week. Meet with designers as necessary to clarify any questions and begin gathering materials for the week ahead.
- **Wireless Microphone Meeting** – (If appropriate) Meeting between Sound Designer, Costume Designer, Hair and Makeup Designer and Advisors to discuss wireless microphone body pack and element placement on the actor's bodies and costumes.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers/Director should share any updates.

NINTH WEEK – Build Begins

Checkpoints:

- **Final Construction Drawings Due** – From T. D. to the shop for start of workday Monday.
- **Draper Meeting** – Costume Designer to meet with Draper(s) to go over build of show.
- **Costume Build Begins** – Costume Build to begin on Monday at start of workday.
- **Scenic Build Begins** – Scenic Build to begin on Monday at start of workday.
- **Scene Shop Design Presentations** – Set Designer presents designs to scene shop employees, discussing specific challenges of the build.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers should share any updates as a result of this weeks meetings.
2. Director should share any updates to the rehearsal schedule with the Production Team.

TENTH WEEK – Rehearsals Begin

Checkpoints:

- **Rehearsals Begin** – Director, Actors, and Stage manager will begin rehearsal this week. SM should check in with T. D. daily to ensure the rehearsal space is safe for rehearsal.
- **Designer Presentations/Read Through** – Designers present the visual/aural representations of their designs for the actors and talk a bit about them to help them understand the larger world that their characters exist within. Designer should try to attend the read through to hear the script out loud and listen for things they may have missed previously.
- **Painter’s Elevations** – Presented at Production Meeting for review by other Designers and Director.
- **Key Diagrams and Preliminary Light Cue List Due** – Lighting Designer to provide light key diagrams for every major scene and share a preliminary cue list.
- **Rehearsal Schedule Distributed** – SM to send rehearsal/tech/performance schedule to actors, crew, and designers.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers/Director should share any updates.

ELEVENTH WEEK – 4 weeks until Tech

Checkpoints:

- **Final Painter’s Elevation Due** – Complete elevations of how all painted surfaces should look due to the Charge Artist on Monday of this week.
- **Rough Working Section and Light Plot Due** – Lighting Designer to Provide an in-progress working section drawing and a working light plot to Lighting Advisor.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers/Director should share any updates.

TWELFTH WEEK – 3 weeks until Tech

Checkpoints:

- **Paint Calls Begin** – Time should be scheduled in the space to begin painting the scenic elements. Set Designer, T. D., and Charge Artist should discuss a priority list of scenic items.
- **Final Light Plot and Blank Blocking Charts Due** – Lighting Designer will design the Final Light Plot. They will also produce Blank Blocking Charts in preparation of rehearsal the following week. Lighting Designer should also provide list of any items that need to be ordered to the T.D./Lighting Advisor

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers should share any updates as a result of this weeks meetings.
2. Director should share any updates to the rehearsal schedule with the Production Team.

THIRTEENTH WEEK – 2 weeks until Tech

Checkpoints:

- **Designer Preview/Run** – (In space if possible) A chance for designers to come in to rehearsal to see an example of the structure of the piece prior to submitting Light/Sound Plots. This can be the running of an act, a single scene, or an open rehearsal that will give a good sense of how the space will be used. No later than Wednesday of this week.
- **Final Sound Plot Due** – Speaker Placement and Audio Equipment needs submitted to Sound Coordinator, and Faculty Advisor by Thursday.
- **Light Plot Due** – Light Plot and all requisite paperwork submitted by Lighting Designer and Master Electrician to Lighting Advisor, and T. D. by Thursday.
- **Light Plot Review** – Lighting Designer, Master Electrician, and T. D. meet to review technical, logistical, and rigging issues with the light plot Friday morning.
- **Light Hang Begins** – Lighting Designer, Master Electrician, Lighting Crew begin hanging lights in the space after approval of Light Plot at Light Plot Review.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

2. Designers/Director should share any updates.

FOURTEENTH WEEK – 1 week until Tech

Checkpoints:

- **Prop Preview** – In attendance: Director, Stage Manager, Prop Master, Set Designer, and Advisors. Meeting to view the actual show props in process to assure that appropriate progress is being made and so that props aren't a surprise when they arrive on stage.
- **First Sound Call** – Quite time in space for Sound Designer and Techs to tune system
- **Light Focus Begins** – Lighting Designer should work with Techs to make sure all instruments are focused this week.
- **Sound Content Review** – In attendance: Director, Sound Designer, and Sound Advisor. An opportunity for the Sound Designer and Director to listen to a preliminary representation of every cue in the show and respond to intention and feel of cues.
- **Sound Cue Sheets** – Paperwork detailing Sound Cues submitted to Stage Manager and Faculty Advisor
- **Lighting Cue Sheets** – Paperwork detailing Sound Cues submitted to Stage Manager and Faculty Advisor
- **Quick Change Plot Due** – Paperwork detailing all Costume Quick Changes submitted by Designer to Stage Manager, Wardrobe Supervisor and Faculty Advisor.
- **Scene Shift Plot Due** – Paperwork detailing all Scenic Shifts, including offstage storage plan and ground plans, submitted to Stage Manager and Faculty Advisor.
- **Scene Shift Meeting** – In attendance: Director, Stage Manager, Set Designer. An opportunity to coordinate scene shifts in advance of Paper Tech to better understand what is required to move from scene to scene. Unless a particularly complex show, this is usually combined with Paper Tech at the discretion of the team.
- **Paper Tech** – In attendance: Director, Stage Manager, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, and Scenic Designer. Coordinate all of the cues in the show. Clarification of sequence and transitions. Further discussion of artistic intention of cues and sequences. Stage Manager should have cues in book prior to this meeting.
- **Clear Com Plot Due** – Created by the SM and given to the Sound Advisor, copies to Sound Designer and T.D.
- **Running Light Meeting** – In attendance: Stage Manager, Master Electrician, and Lighting Designer. Meet to discuss running light needs and placement.

Meeting:

Everyone should be ready to discuss the following:

1. Designers/Director should share any updates.

FIFTEENTH WEEK – Tech Week

Checkpoints:

- **Prop Review** – In attendance: Director, Stage Manager, Prop Master, Set Designer, and Advisors. Meeting to view the actual show props in a completed state. Props should be virtually complete by this point, with only minor details and refinements to finish. Props should be integrated into rehearsal following this meeting.
- **Light Preview** – In attendance: Director, Lighting Designer, Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Managers. Following lighting cues begin written, a chance to see initial looks and respond to intention and feel. Should not be a full cue review but designer should have some looks written.
- **Second Sound Call** – Quiet time in space for sound designers and techs to tune system
- **Run Through for Crew** – A full run through of the show, with the crew watching from the house to understand context. Stage Manager will still run all scenic shifts and transitions. Lighting and Sound
- **Crew Training** – In attendance: Stage Manager, Technical Director, Set Designer, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Run Crew. This session is the first opportunity to train the run crew on their responsibilities for the show. This time is for them to work with everything they will handle in the show. Focus should be on making the crew comfortable with the tasks they will be responsible for. This means both instruction and repetition. It should not fall solely to stage management to train the crew. Stage manager should have crew sheets completed for this training session.
- **Sitzprobe (musical and opera only)** – Orchestra's first rehearsal with the singers and a chance for Sound Designer to start to set/run microphone levels
- **Dry Tech** – In Attendance: Director, Stage Manager, Scenic Designer, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Run Crew, T.D. This is a chance to review all Lighting and Sound cues in the space. The entire show should not be run with stand ins but rather respond cue to cue and look at scenic transitions in advance of the actors begin on the stage.
- **1st Tech** – The coordination of all elements of all elements of the production with the full company present. Use this time to jump Cue-to-Cue or Stop-and-Go Run. Take the time to fix each cue or moment in the show. Emphasis should not be on running the show at this rehearsal.
 - Stage Manager and Director should talk prior to Tech to determine the dynamic of the process, including who will run the day
 - Post Tech Production Meetings – should be kept under an hour. Under no circumstances shall any member of the team be released any later than midnight.
- **2nd Tech (10 of 12)** – The coordination of all elements of all elements of the production with the full company present. Pick up where the team left off in 1st Tech. Again don't rush to get to the run through. Continue to refine individual moments in the show.
 - Stage Manager and Director should talk prior to Tech to determine the dynamic of the process, including who will run the day
 - Post Tech Production Meetings – should be kept under an hour. Under no circumstances shall any member of the team be released any later than midnight.

Meeting:

Production Meeting to happen after each night of Tech. No more weekly meetings.

SIXTEENTH WEEK – Opening Week

Checkpoints:

- **Quick Change and Makeup Workshop** – Time for Actors and Wardrobe crew to learn how to apply the makeup and hairstyles as designed and to work quick changes as needed. Typically not in the Theatre
- **Final Tech** – Tech Run should be the goal for today. Complete work started at 10 of 12 Tech then begin a Run Through of the show.
- **Dress Rehearsal 1-3** – These rehearsals are to focus on integrating costumes. Continue to refine Scenic, Lighting, and Sound elements but make sure focus is placed on the integration of Costumes. The goal should be to run the show in real time to make sure Costume changes can occur in the allotted times.
 - Actors are called from 6:00 – 11:30pm for all dress rehearsals; this call is inclusive of any time needed for company warm up, fight calls, getting into costumes, getting out of costume, and receiving notes at the end of rehearsal. Actors are released no later than 11:30pm.
 - Actors must be out of costumes by 11:00pm to give the costume crew a chance to complete post-show and depart no later than midnight.

Meeting:

- Following Dress Rehearsal – a 30-minute production meeting will take place. The ASM will lead the crew in post-show shutdown. All members of the team are released at midnight.

Opening Performance, Run of Show, Strike

- **All members of the design team are expected to check their email and respond to notes during the run of the show.**
- **All members of the design team will contribute to the strike of the show.**