

Lawrence Shea
Associate Professor of Drama: Video & Media Design

Description of Position

The initial task of this position was to create a rigorous practical and academic curriculum from a diverse array of real world media based activities for live events, pass this Curriculum Proposal document through the College Council approval process and then implement it over time.

This process has been wonderfully successful, in Fall 2014 there will be 5 Graduate students in the program and we have successfully inserted ourselves into the School of Drama's ambitious production schedule, showcasing advanced media designs in 12 productions, in all of the different theater spaces. With the enthusiastic support of so many, I have been able to weave this new design area into the complex School of Drama course schedule, by co-teaching in early design classes (Freshman-Basic Design, Sophomore-Design for the Stage), serving as one of the primary Faculty on the co-taught Future Stages course (faculty from Design, Directing, Playwriting and Acting areas); creating and teaching several new courses (Decoding Media, Staging Media, Expanded Theater) and finally introducing a level of critical discourse around the history of art with a focus on mass media by designing and teaching one of the required Graduate Colloquium sections the Spring semesters, which I've done as a voluntary addition to my teaching load because I feel it is so important. In addition to these curricular activities I've been extremely active personally designing media for several of the School's productions.

THE ALICE PROJECT, a 2010 main-stage production was conceived as a showcase for the new media capabilities the school was supporting. In order to realize the ambitious student design ideas I led a mini-class introducing multiple new video and digital technologies (including the interactive software Max/MSP that I've used professionally for years) and they were able to create a complex system of live cameras and multiple projections from scratch to serve as the media backbone for this complex show. I've also designed the media for the schools production of ANGELS IN AMERICA (2012), and ALICE IN BED (2013) utilizing multiple new technologies and creative software coding (always passing this knowledge onto students) for the production of imagery and actor-tracking floor projections. This commitment to the School has been demanding but extremely fulfilling and has achieved my goal of producing momentum to carry this new program to maturity.

Teaching:

54-171 Basic Design (taught by S.Tsu)

- Freshmen - Guest lectures on semiotics and art history, participate in critiques

54-231 Design for the Stage (co-taught with Design Faculty)

- Sophomores – focus on metaphor & creative interpretation of scripts.

54-399 Decoding Media (New Course; Fall 2012 & Fall 2013)

- Juniors & 1st year Grads – script based analysis, visual research, technical specification and conceptual media designs for the stage.

54-400/900 Staging Media (New Course; Spring 2012 & Spring 2013)

- Juniors & 1st & 2nd year Grads – a practical, process-oriented class, focused on building the skills to go from a conceptual design to an actual completed show.

54-498/798 Expanded Theater (New Course; Spring 2012, Fall 2013, Spring 2013)

(This course will be a major Drama component of the IDeATe network)

- Seniors & Grads – focus on developing new media technologies for performance, display, and interaction.

54-405/736/822/836/922/936 Future Stages (co-taught with M.Weems, N.Sissons)

- Seniors & Grads – Senior Actors & Graduate Directors & Designers - Group based rapid sketch-work in devised multi-media theater

54-391/881 Media Design Skills

- All years – technical seminars for skills building

54-880 School of Drama Collaboration Projects

- Special course I created for outside CMU collaborative Projects
- Pittsburgh Symphony 2012, VIA Festival 2013

54-786 Graduate Colloquium - Media (New Course, Spring 2012, 2013, 2014)

- Graduates (from all S.O.D. disciplines)
– Critical readings & written analysis on Art History & mass media

54-875 Graduate Media Seminar

- Video & Media Design Graduate students - critical readings on technology, Art & performance

International Teaching

Media in Performance Workshop – November 2013 - Tallin, Estonia

- Led a two-week intensive workshop (with N.Sissons),

Based on the Future Stages model for teaching devised multi-media theater.

Hosted by: The Estonian Academy of Music & Theater, The Baltic Film and Media School, The Estonian Academy of Arts, and the UT Viljandi Culture Academy.

Supported by: the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and the Fulbright - Institute of International Education, US State Department.

Department/Unit Service

- 2013-14 School of Drama Centennial Events Committee
- Extensive work on planning and execution of the 3 Centennial events in Pittsburgh, New York and Los Angeles.
- 2012-14 School of Drama Season "Lab Review" Committee
- 2013 School of Drama Head Review Committee
- 2013 Barbara Anderson Gala Celebration
- Managed video content creation, system design & implementation
- 2013 School of Drama Lighting Faculty Search Committee
- 2013 ALICE IN BED
- media designer for the SOD production
- 2012 ANGELS IN AMERICA
- media designer for the SOD production
- 2010-2011 THE ALICE PROJECT
- Technical instruction & advising students in media system design & implementation
- 2011 School of Drama Lighting Faculty Search Committee
- 2010-14 BFA & MFA Academic Advisor
- 2010-14 Recruitment of graduate and undergraduate prospective students
- 2010-14 Production Advisor for School of Drama Productions with assigned Media Designers
Weekly meetings during production periods:
- 2014-15 Kevan Loney - THE WHIZ
Jordan Harrison - TROJAN WOMEN
Danni Zhang - BLISS
Kevan Loney - STEUBENVILLE
Kevin Ramser - WOLVES
 - 2013-14 Kevan Loney - THE NINA VARIATIONS
Jordan Harrison - THE CRUCIBLE
Jordan Harrison - GLASS MENAGERIE
 - 2012-13 Bryce Cutler - ANTIGONE
Dan Efros - MACBETT
Calvin Johnson - ROMEO & JULIET
 - 2011-12 Robert Figueria - MAD FOREST
Michael Epstein - SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER
Bryce Cutler - GOOD PERSON OF SETZUAN
 - 2010-11 Multiple students - THE ALICE PROJECT
- 2010-14 Thesis Supervisor for SOD Graduates:
- 2013 - 2014 Erik Larson - Costume Design
 - 2012 - 2013 Christine Cassius - Costume Design
 - 2011 - 2012 Danielle Laubach - Scenic Design
Erik Lawson - Sound Design
- 2010-14 School of Drama Cross - Option Committee
- 2010-14 School of Drama Design Option Committee

National Service

- 2012 Invited External Reviewer - Tenure & Promotion
Southern Illinois University - College of Mass Communication and Media Arts

Visiting Artists Hosted

2013 Mary Franck - Media Artist & interaction designer

- Conducted a 3 day workshop on the interactive software TouchDesigner, subsequently used for the design of THE NINA VARIATIONS & GLASS MENAGERIE

2012 Tracy Brigden – Artistic Director City Theater, Pittsburgh

- reviewed student media designs and led group critique in Decoding Media

2012 Matt Morrow – Associate Artistic Director City Theater, Pittsburgh

- reviewed student media designs and led group critique in Decoding Media

2012 Caden Manson – Director, workshop in Future Stages

2011 Matthew Weinstein – Painter & Computer Animation Artist

2010 Rob Roth - Multi-media & Performance Artist

Facilities Development & Improvement

STUDIO 201:

- Ongoing improvements to this warehouse space for devised multi-media theater. Including the installation of direct to campus fiber-optic connection and installation of campus Wi-Fi.

Lear Media Studio & A21 Media Lab:

- Repurposing and technical improvements to these Purnell spaces to create an efficient and productive home for the Video & Media Design students.

SOD Documentation system:

- Advised the Production Manager on the purchase of a new HD documentation system, greatly improving the quality of the documentation of the Schools productions.

Video Projection & Media capabilities Technical Advising:

- Ongoing research and advising on the upgrading of media technologies for the School

Collegiate, Intercollegiate, and University Service

IDeATe – Integrative Design, Technology and Arts Network (www.cmu.edu/ideate/)

- Developing new courses & serving on multiple curriculum & planning committees:
 - Introduction to Media Synthesis & Analysis – receiving a summer stipend to develop a core IDEATE course for ECE & CS students who wish to participate in the IDEATE curriculum, to be offered by new adjunct IDeATe Faculty in Fall 2014
 - Emerging Media Masters Program in Pittsburgh, Silicon Valley & New York:
 - CFA Curriculum Development committee for this new masters program
 - Space & Equipment design committee
 - Expanded Theater Studio – IDeATe & MEM capstone course planned for the Fall 2015, co-taught with Ali Momeni (School of Art). Developing this class as a studio for advanced projects in performance technology development with students and faculty across CS, CIT, Drama, Design, Art, Architecture & Music).
 - Warner Hall Interactive Display: developing a system (with Ann Mundell & Sarah Pickett) over the summer 2014 to highlight integrative arts and technology activities across CMU for the 1st floor of Warner Hall.

Thesis Advising - for Graduate Students in the School of Art

2013-14 Yun Mi Her
2012-13 Scott Andrew
2011-12 Nina Sarnelle
Sun Rok Choi
Jesse England

Thesis Advising - for Undergraduate BXA Students
2013-2014 Brian Pettitt-Schieber

2011-2013 Faculty Senate (2 year service)

2012-2013 Student Affairs Committee (1 year appointment)

Spring 2013 Guest Lecture

– *Media Performance* course - School of Art – prof. Melissa Ragona

Brief Course Descriptions:

Design for the Stage (Sophomores, co-taught with Design Faculty)

This course deals with the fundamental building blocks of the various disciplines of Theatrical Design. Through the development of various projects, we will begin to build processes for: visualizing and auralizing a play through the principles of design, interpreting a text, and communicating your ideas through a variety of processes and products. See class schedule.

Decoding Media (Juniors & 1st & 2nd year Graduates)

Media technologies are designed to do a lot with very little effort. This creates a problem of abundance for artists trying to use these technologies in creative ways. One can relatively quickly pull images off the internet and project them huge onstage, but what does it mean?

Decoding is the term I'm using to help you keep control of your process and create meaningful (not just dazzling) imagery for the stage. The entire theatrical process can be considered as a series of decodings and re-encodings; first decoding the text (by the creative team), re-encoding (the design) and finally decoding by the audience. This class is designed to give students a solid foundation in contemporary media skills while simultaneously providing the historical context of the fascinating evolution of media technologies, all toward the goal of creating vital media designs for dramatic storytelling.

Staging Media (Juniors & 1st & 2nd year Graduates)

Staging Media is a practical, process-oriented class, focused on building the skills to go from a conceptual design to an actual completed show. The course covers 3 major topics; media workflow, media system design and media staging. Through real-world examples, conceptual design projects, and hands-on lab work students will learn the best practices for bringing their designs to life. A great deal of technical information will be covered including; video compression formats, projector optics, cueing software, projection mapping & custom surfaces, media servers both custom and professional, networking and control, live camera systems, and stage rigging for projection systems.

Expanded Theater (Seniors & Graduates)

This class is a hands-on laboratory where students experiment with advanced image capture techniques, cueing & playback systems as well as interactive technologies in a theater-lab context. Students will explore high-definition video capture as well as DIY techniques like RGBD (using a Kinect hack). Students will learn Video-looping techniques and the proper preparation of video cues for use in media servers.

The course will meet off campus at the 15,000 square foot “Studio 201” space and technologies at students’ disposal include a 12 foot wide Pepper’s Ghost screen, numerous moving rear screens, 30 foot wide blue-screen area, multiple video projectors, kinect depth cameras, and other surveillance style cameras as well as high end Sony Ex3 and other high-def cameras. Students will be introduced to several software systems, specifically Max/Jitter and Millumin, and they will get a quick exposure to three professional media server systems (Watchout, D3, and M-box), so as to understand the basic hardware and software elements of all media servers. Students will then choose one or a combination of software and equipment to build their media systems. After individual experimentation and software-based projects, final small-group projects will be created (2 -3 students per group).

In addition to software instruction, lectures and screenings will cover inspiring historical and contemporary work that deal with surveillance artworks, optical illusion, authoritarian systems, ideas of presence and other pertinent issues.

Graduate Colloquium: (Graduates from all SOD areas)

This class is designed to provide an in depth exposure to theoretical concepts and perspectives that have shaped the course of *the criticism* of Western Artistic production for the last century. From the 1930’s debates surrounding German Expressionism emerged critical/political perspectives that resonate to this day. Through short reading response papers and a longer final paper students will explore the relationship between these ideas and their artistic production.

Ideas about Realism, Modernist Experimentation, the Avant-Garde, Mass Vs. High Culture and American Postmodernism will be explored contextually and historically. Readings and lectures are structured to expose students to a variety of artworks (early 1900's German Expressionist set designs and films, the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh and Andy Warhol etc.), and the classic critical texts that evaluate these works. In-class discussion will help students assimilate conceptually difficult ideas in a way that demonstrates the power criticism has to connect the artistic production of a wide variety of artists in many medias, across time.

Future Stages - (Senior Actors & Design & Directing Graduates)

Co-taught by Directing, Design, and acting Faculty, also in the “Studio 201” warehouse space, this course combines all options from the School of Drama in a unique configuration: through working collaboratively across disciplines, students will investigate innovative approaches to contemporary theater and new ways of storytelling. Contemporary techniques for media technology integration will be explored through technical demos and exercises, readings, viewing of other artist’s work and presentation of scene-sketches. We will combine simple & advanced media technologies (analog live feed video, digitally manipulated imaging, computer vision & interactivity, projection mapping) with direction, design, and performance.

Directors, designers, and actors will work in groups to generate original ideas, images, texts, and material in a workshop environment. All students will have exposure to the tools for integrating major media elements into performance, (hardware, software, conceptual, performative).

Graduate Media Seminar – (Video and Media Design Grad students)

This class is a seminar class for Video and Media Design Grad students. Readings and discussions will focus on contemporary topics in Media Design and current student projects; guest speakers and excursions to local events will supplement the class.