AD⁴⁶³ – Collaborative Design Studio | Design for the Theater Arts

Instructor: Martina Decker, Associate Professor | Interim Director of the School of Art + Design
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Fall 2025 | Mondays 12:00pm – 5:20pm, Thursdays 12:00pm – 5:20pm
Office Hours 10:00am – 11am by appointment only
Class Location: Material Dynamics Lab
Credits: 5

"The magic of the theatre is that it's a collaborative art."

Stephen Sondheim

This collaborative studio unites interior, industrial, digital, and architectural design students to explore how theater texts can inspire new approaches to space, objects, and media. Working in interdisciplinary teams with guidance from NJIT's theater department, students will create realized artifacts ranging from installations and performative objects to digital media or promotional concepts, that may even influence the spring production of *Curtains* in the Spring of 26. The focus is not theater design training, but expanding each discipline through collaboration, critique, and experimentation.

Through a lecture series, discussions and readings, the studio will examine how collaboration can impact design:

COURSE STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE:
All students are expected to attend all classes, work on their projects in studio, and participate in group-discussions. Student presentations are a mandatory part of the course and should be seen as invaluable opportunities for learning. Project assignments will be issued on the dates listed in the schedule below. Each project assignment is due at the beginning of class, on its due date, for review. You will also be expected to submit your work in digital form, containing documentation of the entire assignment, at the beginning of each review unless otherwise specified.

1	Thu	4-Sep-25	Orientation and Lecture; Assign Reading of Judas	
1	Mon	8-Sep-25	Interview with the Director - Brain Storming	Last Day for 100% Refund, Full or Partial Withdrawal
2	Thu	11-Sep-25	Team Work Session	
2	Mon	15-Sep-25	Team Work Session	Last Day for 90% Refund, Full or Partial Withdrawal
3	Thu	18-Sep-25	Team Work Session	
3	Mon	22-Sep-25	Review Day: Campaign Presentations; Assign Curtains Reading	
4	Thu	25-Sep-25	Discussion of Curtains and Team Work Session	
4	Mon	29-Sep-25	Interview with the Director - Brain Storming	Last Day for 50% Refund, Full Withdrawal
5	Thu	2-Oct-25	No classes held (Wellness Day)	Wellness Day
5	Mon	6-Oct-25	Team Work Session	
6	Thu	9-Oct-25	Team Work Session	
6	Mon	13-Oct-25	Team Work Session	
7	Thu	16-Oct-25	Team Work Session	
7	Mon	20-Oct-25	Refinement Session	Last Day for 25% Refund, Full Withdrawal
8	Thu	23-Oct-25	Team Work Session	
8	Mon	27-Oct-25	Team Work Session	
9	Thu	30-Oct-25	Interim Review Rehearsal and Team Work Session	
9	Mon	3-Nov-25	Interim Review Presentation	
10	Thu	6-Nov-25	Feedback and Revision / Team Work Session	
10	Mon	10-Nov-25	Team Work Session	Last Day to Withdraw from Classes
11	Thu	13-Nov-25	Team Work Session	
11	Mon	17-Nov-25	Team Work Session	
12	Thu	20-Nov-25	Team Work Session	
12	Mon	24-Nov-25	Team Work Session	
13	Tue	25-Nov-25	Thursday Classes Meet / Team Work Session	Thursday Classes Meet
13	Thu	27-Nov-25	No class (Thanksgiving Recess)	Thanksgiving Recess Begins. No Classes
13	Mon	1-Dec-25	Final Development Sessions	
14	Thu	4-Dec-25	Final Development Sessions	
14	Mon	8-Dec-25	Rehearsal for final review with instructor feedback	
15	Thu	11-Dec-25	Final Review Presentation	Last Day of Classes
15	Mon	15-Dec-25	Final Exams	Final Exam Week
16	Thu	18-Dec-25	Final Exams	Final Exam Week
16	Mon	22-Dec-25	Final Grades Due	Final Grades Due

<u>Please note that this schedule might be subject to change.</u>

<u>COURSE MATERIALS</u>
Required texts for this course:
- Guirgis, Stephen Adly. *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot.* New York: Faber and Faber, 2005.
- Kander, John, Fred Ebb, and Rupert Holmes. *Curtains: The Musical.* New York: Samuel French, 2008.

Additional readings and resources will be provided by the instructor

<u>EVALUATION:</u>
Grades for each project are initially assessed on the day that the project is submitted for review. Final grades will be determined at the end of the semester, with the complete submission of your team's work from the entire semester; it will also include an assessment of your individual participation in the course and group sessions. Grades are determined according to the instructor's judgment of how well members of each team achieve the objectives of the course, and the specific objectives and requirements of each project assignment. All group reviews of student work are a mandatory part of the course and should be seen as invaluable opportunities for learning. Although these sessions may inform the grading by the instructor, grades are not determined by the reviews. The value of each project assignment, as a percentage of your total evaluation for this course, is as follows:

<u>GRADE COMPONENTS:</u>		<u>GRADE SYSTEM:</u>	
Assignment 1	25%	A (4.0)	Superior
Assignment 2a	20%	B+ (3.5)	Excellent
Assignment 2b	35%	B (3.0)	Very Good
Individual Participation	10%	C+ (2.5)	Good
Digital Documentation	5%	C (2.0)	Acceptable
Readings	5%	D (1.0)	Minimum
	100%	F (0.0)	Inadequate

<u>INCOMPLETE GRADES</u>
The grade of "Incomplete" may be given only under rare and documented circumstances. Instructors must provide written details of the remaining work and deadlines to the student and the Department Chair. The "Incomplete" grade must be resolved in the next regular semester to avoid automatic conversion to a failing grade. Work may not be accepted after the end of the following semester unless the Dean of Students certifies extenuating circumstances, the instructor agrees to process a late change of grade, and the Office of the Provost pre-authorizes the change.

<u>COURSE OBJECTIVES</u>
Throughout the term, we will have opportunities to rigorously examine a number of issues individually as well as in teamwork. Students will be expected to execute and present designs. Furthermore, we will develop convincing design propositions that are routed in analysis. The class will be provided information, through presentations, discussions, readings, and reviews, to allow you to focus on these objectives:

- to develop collaborative skills that are highly accomplished
- to gain an appreciation of the nature and value of collaborative practices
- to engage in collaboration, consensus building, and teamwork **[CIDA Standard 5a, 5b]**
- to develop and implement an effective research strategy appropriate for your information

need **[CIDA Standard 8i, 8j]**
- to develop an awareness and knowledge of collaboration in the context of the theater arts **[CIDA Standard 5a]**
- to develop an appreciation of the broad design implications of emerging technologies **[CIDA Standard 6b, 9f]**
- to develop the ability to examine and comprehend the fundamental principles present in relevant precedents, including works by designers that make use of emergent technologies **[CIDA Standard 8e, 10c, 10f]**
- to make choices regarding the incorporation of such principles into your own projects **[CIDA Standard 8c, 8g]**
- to contemplate new design applications for novel technologies that might exploit their unique properties and capabilities **[CIDA Standard 6f, 8k]**
- to develop design propositions that are reasonable and convincing arguments based on research, analysis, and evidence **[CIDA Standard 8d, 5f]**
- to develop innovative design works that elegantly, and appropriately, make use of emergent technologies **[CIDA Standard 8g, 8k]**
- to develop an independent sense of experimentation and scrutiny, yet participate in critical discourse **[CIDA Standard 8f, 7c, 5e]**
- to demonstrate effective representation and communication skills that are highly accomplished throughout the semester **[CIDA Standard 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 5c]**
- to develop awareness of the roles of multiple disciplines and stakeholders in shaping design environments **[CIDA Standard 5a]**
- to understand the importance of collaborating with populations, audiences, and communities impacted by design in order to build trust and address real needs **[CIDA Standard 5b]**
- to strengthen communication skills across allied disciplines by using shared terminology and language specific to collaborative design **[CIDA Standard 5c]**
- to utilize technology-based collaboration methods—including digital platforms and shared documentation—to coordinate interdisciplinary teamwork **[CIDA Standard 5d]**
- to reflect on the dynamics of team collaboration, including distribution of roles, responsibilities, and strategies for building trust **[CIDA Standard 5e]**
- to create design solutions informed by the perspectives of multiple disciplines, stakeholders, and clients **[CIDA Standard 5f]**

GENERATIVE AI POLICY
Generative AI tools may be used in this course as long as their role is transparent and properly acknowledged. Students may use AI for research, brainstorming, prototyping, visualization, or refining ideas. However, AI should not replace critical design thinking, analysis, or individual authorship. Any work generated or assisted by AI must be documented and cited, and students should be prepared to explain their process and decisions. Undisclosed or inappropriate use will be considered a violation of the Academic Integrity Code.

DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION:
Digital documentation of the entire work of the semester will be required of **EACH** student. The documentation for each assigned project is to be submitted on the day of each review, before the presentations, unless otherwise specified in the assignment description. This documentation will provide the Department with a review of your study, and information contained in the digital files might be used in future electronic or printed media publications, either in whole or in part. This record will also enable interested students, faculty, and others to have access to your work in the future. Please be advised that it is highly recommended that you make a copy of the digital package for your own records. The instructor will give detailed instructions on how to submit the documentation via google drive.

THE DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION HAS THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:
- The title of the digital package should be the student name only (LastFirst).
- By the end of the semester the digital submission should contain three folders titled:

ASSIGNMENT 1, ASSIGNMENT 2a, and ASSIGNMENT 2b. Each project folder shall contain six folders (unless otherwise specified on the project assignment) titled: IMAGES, VIDEOS, PRESENTATION, RESEARCH, TEXT, and SOURCE_FILES.

- In the first folder, IMAGES, you are to place high-resolution images of your own work that was submitted. Each image is to be a 72 ppi/dpi JPEG, at maximum quality (i.e. compression value 10 or 12). The longest dimension of each image, horizontal or vertical, must not be less than 3600 pixels. When you title each image file, simply number the file (i.e. 01.jpg, 02.jpg, 03.jpg, 04.jpg, 05.jpg ...).
- The second folder, VIDEOS should contain all animations and videos you have produced to demonstrate your work. The larger the size and quality, the better, but movies shall not be smaller than 1024 x 768 pixels.
- In the third folder, PRESENTATION, you are to include a copy of any PowerPoint, Keynote or similar presentations that were made. This folder must also contain a PDF copy of your PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation in its entirety.
- In the fourth folder, RESEARCH, you are to place complete documentation of research findings as PDFs. A bibliography and hyperlinks to Internet content should also be included in a PDF or MSWord (.doc) file that summarizes the resources you referenced. You will use the Chicago Style for your referencing: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- In the last folder, TEXT, you are to place a text 500-word minimum description of your project in MSWord (.doc) format. You will use the Chicago Style for your referencing: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- In the last folder, SOURCE_FILES, you will place files such as Maya, Revit, Photoshop, or similar, that enabled your final presentation materials.

This digital documentation submission will be evaluated in relation to the stated objectives of the course and a demonstrative consideration of:

- The quality and legibility of the chosen images.
- The appropriateness of the images in relation to the objectives of the study.
- Selective documentation of the whole work, and significant parts of the project.
- Evidence of ambitious and thorough research.
- Craft and quality of writing.
- Adherence to the requirements listed above.

KEPLER POSTING:
Kepler documentation is mandatory. You will receive more information regarding how many files to post on Kepler. All files must be resized and renamed. Failure to present your work on Kepler will result in a "Kepler-F" for the class.

BACKUP YOUR WORK:
Students are required to maintain and complete backups of all their computer-based work. It is the responsibility of each student or team to restore or recreate any work that is lost for any reason For suggestions on backup processes, please contact the NJIT HelpDesk.

ATTENDANCE:
Attendance will be taken during each class and is an explicitly required component of all on-campus/location-based classes for all students in the College of Architecture and Design. After three absences students may be docked one-half grade for each subsequent unexcused absence. In other words, if the final grade would have been an "A", it results in a "B+". Similarly, a "B+" is reduced to a "B", and so on. There is a one-half grade penalty for each absence after the third.
In the case of illness or other special circumstance, notification should be given to the instructor as soon as possible and before the date in question.
Student-athletes are required to attend all classes. A student-athlete may only miss class when representing NJIT in intercollegiate competition. No student-athlete may miss any regularly

scheduled classes for any practice activities.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES
NJIT is committed to supporting students observing religious holidays. Students must notify the instructor in writing of any conflicts between course requirements and religious observances, ideally by the end of the second week of classes and no later than two weeks before the anticipated absence. Academically reasonable accommodations will be provided, allowing students to complete missed assignments, exams, quizzes, or other coursework within the term. Students will not be penalized for properly documented absences, and confidentiality regarding religious observances will be maintained.

TARDINESS:
Students are expected to arrive to class on time. The time limit that constitutes an absence versus tardiness is 15 minutes.

LATE WORK:
Project assignments and digital documentation of your work are due at the beginning of class on the specified dates. Students should make every effort to avoid incomplete work and late submissions. Late submissions are not acceptable, except in the case of documented illness or special circumstances.

LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW:
Please note that Wednesday the 10th of November 2025 is the last day to withdraw from this course.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students seeking accommodations due to disabilities are required to notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: NJIT Academic Integrity Code.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

CELL PHONE POLICY
The use of cell phones during class time is only permitted for emergencies.

VERIFICATION OF PRESENCE
Per NJIT policy, all courses require a Verification of Presence/Academic Engagement assignment via Canvas. This will be a short, graded check-in assignment early in the semester.

CONTACT & COMMUNICATION
The best way to reach me is by email. Office hours are by appointment only, Monday/Thursday 10–11 am. Students are expected to regularly check their NJIT email for announcements and updates.