

THE 2380, History of Theater: Technology and Stages (ID, Humanities/Architectural Technology)
Profs. Ting Chin and Christopher Swift

GRADING RUBRIC: ESSAY – SPACE/DESIGN

1. EVIDENCE

	25	22	19	16
How successfully has the student researched and described the physical and historical archive (theatrical reviews and playbills, ground plans and elevations, photographs, drawings, and critical texts on design and architecture)?	Research relied on archival and secondary materials. Expertly described. Citations authoritative and complete.	Research relied on mostly secondary evidence. Good descriptions of the space. Good citation support.	Evidence decent, however incomplete. Descriptions are satisfactory without much detail. Citations need some work.	Incorporation of evidence is minimal. Descriptions are thin. Very little, or no, citation support.

2. DEVELOPMENT

	25	22	19	16
How well did the student answer the prompts for the assignment? How well did the student put the evidence in conversation with terms and concepts from the course?	Fully developed ideas that directly respond to the essay prompts. Terms and concepts expertly handled in the analysis.	Well-developed ideas that respond satisfactorily to essay prompts. Some terms and concepts defined and used generally in the analysis of space and design.	Development of ideas is weak and essay prompts only partially engaged. Terms and concepts only minimally incorporated into the analysis.	Minimal or no development of ideas. Student does not respond to essay prompts. Terminology minimal or absent all together. Analysis is facile.

3. CRITICAL RESPONSE:

	25	22	19	16
How well did the student draw conclusions about the subjects and concepts? How did the spatial configuration and design shape reception of the performance?	Thoughtfully, insightfully responds to the material and concepts with original ideas. Conclusions are novel and persuasive.	Effectively integrates original ideas and personal experiences with the subjects of analysis.	Integration of original thinking and topics of the essay is basic and somewhat brief. Cursory conclusion.	Minimal, if any, integration or critical response.

4. SYNTAX, GRAMMAR, STYLE

	25	22	19	16
How clear is the student's writing style? Is the essay well organized? Is the grammar correct?	Clear organization, very few grammatical errors, and specific, vivid language.	Organization is somewhat clear, a few grammatical and spelling issues, and clear—if unsophisticated—language.	Somewhat difficult to follow main points, grammatical errors begin to obscure meaning, vocabulary is basic	No clear organizational pattern, very poor grammar and confusing style of writing.

Prompts for Essay on Architectural Space

Part I. When was the theater building constructed and for what use? Who is the architect? If it is a purpose-built theater, what kinds of plays were first performed there? If it is a converted space, what was the original use of the building and when was it converted? What changes did the architects have to make to adapt the building so it could be used as a theater? What vision did the architects have for the new theater, i.e., what kinds of plays or entertainment events were envisioned for the space? How did the architects execute their design concept on the exterior of the building, in the marquee, lobby, auditorium, and seating arrangements?

Part II. As discussed throughout the semester, the design and organization of spectator space informs the ways in which audiences experience theatre (democratic vs. hierarchical, socially interactive vs. socially hermetic, monumental vs. intimate, sacred vs. profane, etc.). In your opinion, how does the composition of the production's theatrical space (defined by McAuley) influence your experience of the production? Based on your experience and observation of other audience members, how did the contours, dimensions, dynamics, and arrangements of theatrical space contribute to social engagements before and after

the start of the play? Did certain design elements create expectations about the performance? In your opinion, was the theatrical space an appropriate choice for the play you witnessed? Why, or why not?

Evaluation: You will be graded on how well you are able to show a connection between Parts I and II, i.e., how well you are able to describe theatrical space and how well you discuss elements of theatrical space in terms of social experience and interaction.

Prompts for Essay on Scenic Space

Part I. When was the play written and by whom? What is the genre of the play (tragedy, family drama, satire, spectacle, etc.)? Who designed the stage scenery and how does this particular design converse with the designer's body of work? Describe the scenery as best you can: talk about colors, shapes, moving set pieces, stationary set pieces, realistic and non-realistic elements, historical styles, and the ways in which light, sound, and physical movement interacted with scenic elements.

Part II. How did the set design interact with, support, contradict, or enhance the themes, narrative, and style of the play? How, specifically? Were there moments in the production when visual texts meaningfully superseded verbal texts? In the end, do you believe the design was successful (thematically, narratively, as a form of spectacle or entertainment)? Why, or why not?

Evaluation: You will be evaluated (graded) on how well you are able to show a connection between Parts I and II, i.e., how well you are able to describe the design in words and how well you analyze the design in terms of the themes, stories, characters, and actions of the play itself.