

University of Florida School of Theatre and Dance
THE 6973c: Project in Lieu of Thesis
Fall 2022

MFA Design/Production Coordinator: Jennifer Dasher

Instructor: Mihai Ciupe

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Meeting Times: To Arrange

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays – 4th period or by appointment

Credits: 3-6

Prerequisites: Admission to Candidacy

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Project in Lieu of Thesis is a combination of a final project, presented in public performance, demonstrating expertise in scenic design. and the accompanying paper in lieu of a traditional thesis, detailing the preparation and execution of the design in a realized production, requiring the advisor's consent. It must be a significant piece of work that will demonstrate the student's expertise in both the academic and practical fields of the theatre, resulting in a document of substantial length (usually 25-50 pages).

The Scenic Design MFA students are assigned a design project in support of SoTD productions.

The MFA Project in Lieu of Thesis is expected to be a significant assignment in a main-stage production during the third year of study. Usually, these assignments are made and confirmed during the preceding spring term before the student enters the third year of study. The project may be one that has been suggested by the student.

However, the project assignment is the ultimate and direct responsibility of the Graduate Program Coordinators in consultation and collaboration with the mentors, Area Coordinators, and the Director of the School of Theatre and Dance. Project assignments (Acting or Design) should be made with concerns for the best interests of the student designer, the needs and opportunities for design in the current production season, and the agreement of each production director.

The paper accompanying the MFA Project in Lieu of Thesis closely and carefully documents the student's work in the preparation and execution of the design project. It is an academic document that is publicly accessible and should, like all such documents, give a reader who has not seen the production in question a wealth of information and interpretive material about the play, the production, and the student's contribution to it. It is important that the designer consciously approach the MFA project-in-lieu of thesis assignment with a view to its eventual analysis and documentation.

PURPOSE OF COURSE:

The Project in Lieu of Thesis is designed as a capstone project for the Master of Fine Arts in Acting or Design/Production.

OBJECTIVES:

In this course students will:

1. Identify and refine a creative research topic for investigation;
2. Provide an opportunity for students to detail methodology for researching and responding to the needs of their role/assignment in the production;
3. Conduct a review of pertinent literature and research that supports this performance/production project;
4. Demonstrate the knowledge acquired through research and creative process in a paper that documents the methodology and results of the production assignment.

COORDINATORS/INSTRUCTORS OF RECORD

The MFA Acting Coordinator is Tim Altmeyer.

The MFA Design Production Coordinator is Jennifer Dasher

Design Area Mentors are Mihai Ciupe (Scenic), Jennifer Dasher (Costumes), Stan Kaye (Lighting), Michael Clark (Projection), and Jing Zhao (Sound).

First and Second Readers are typically assigned in the Spring semester prior to the third year of study. The First and Second Readers make up the Supervisory Committee for the student.

SCHEDULED MEETING TIMES:

Meetings are to be arranged between the MFA Student and the First Reader.

The student is responsible for keeping the committee chair (First Reader) up-to-date on his/her progress.

Prior to starting the project, MFA students must clarify with their Project Advisor all the expectations for the project including draft deadlines and submission dates.

A typical schedule includes a version of the following:

- The student will submit the paper for the project in lieu of thesis to his/her first reader.
- The reader has 2 weeks to provide written feedback to the student.
- The student will have 1 week to make necessary changes or rewrites. The first reader will provide written feedback to the student within 2 weeks.
- The student will make necessary adjustments within 1 week.
- If the paper is in an acceptable form, the first reader will send it to the second reader.

- A final version is created and the oral defense and signature page is completed.

--The above is only a model/suggestion. Students and their committee chairs (First Readers) must create a calendar that allows all necessary deadlines to be successfully met.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS:

The student will:

1. Keep a complete journal and record of research, sketches, drawings, budget, and promptbooks, as appropriate to the project.
2. Clarify the approach and topics to be addressed in the paper by creating a paper outline.
3. Consult with his/her First Reader regularly to discuss the status of the creative project.
4. In consultation with the First Reader, establish meeting times and deadlines for drafts and final submission of the paper.
5. Submit the paper for review according to predetermined deadlines. In order to guarantee sufficient time for grading, the final submission date will usually be no later than one week before the final day of classes.

The First Reader may attend rehearsals or performances, shop sessions, production meetings, fittings, etc. (when appropriate and within reason) upon the student's request.

Students submit materials to the Chairs of the Supervisory Committees (First Readers) in conformance with the established deadline dates. The Committee Chair (First Reader) advises when he/she is completely satisfied with the document. At that point, the student or First Reader presents a clean copy of the complete document to the Second Reader for his/her comments and suggestions. The student reviews these notes with his/her Chair (First Reader). The student presents the final copy of the paper to the other member(s) of the Supervisory Committee for final review before the oral defense.

- Students are advised to submit well-organized and edited documents at each stage of the process.
- Sloppy submissions that have not been edited or proofread will be returned unread to the student.

Project in Lieu of Thesis paper must be defended and in final form prior to submission to the College of the Arts.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:

Evaluation and grading of the project is administered by department-assigned supervisory committees, consisting of two graduate faculty members; one serving as chair (First Reader) and the other serving as a member (Second Reader).

The project grade is based on the quality of the design work performed (including

process and collaboration) and the quality of the written work submitted. Design/Production students will be assessed on the quality of the written work expressing their means to produce a design that serves both the artistic and functional aspects of the production.

MFA PROJECT/THESIS TIMELINE:

To facilitate degree completion, it is recommended that all MFA Project in Lieu of Thesis Papers be completed by the end of the semester in which the project was produced. Faculty members are not obligated to review project papers during the summer, which may delay degree completion.

Students who do not complete their work according to standard academic year deadlines (August-April) may delay their graduation, and be required to register for additional final term credits, at their own expense.

MFA THESIS/PROJECT REPORT FORMAT:

Each student is responsible for conforming to regulations governing the format, final term procedures, and dates for submitting his/her thesis to his/her Supervisory Committee. Students MUST follow the procedures outlined online.

<http://www.graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/Guide-for-ETDs.pdf>

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

UF students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner while pursuing their studies. They are expected to abide by the UF Academic Honesty Policy, which defines an academic honesty offense as "the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage." In the context of this course, this includes conducting original research and properly citing sources for any materials (both printed and online) used in writing the supporting research paper. *Submitting work that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade.*

For more information on the UF Academic Honor Code see:
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at

<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

COURSE FEES:

Information about associate course fees can be found at <https://one.ufl.edu/soc/2188>

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.