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American Association of State Colleges and Universities
Japan Studies Institute

Curriculum Prospectus: Visual Aesthetics of Japan

Course: THEA 3200 Stage Design Concepts

Catalog Description: An introduction to the artistic and analytic processes of stage design. Students will develop skills in conceptualizing and both visually and verbally communicating theatrical designs. Pre-Requisite(s): A minimum grade of "C" in Script Analysis THEA 2300, Stagecraft THEA 2332; or permission of Instructor.

Assignment: Absolute Ad

The course is a required prerequisite course for all theatre majors to take before entering one or more of three design courses: Scene Design, Lighting Design, and Costume Design. As stated in the catalog description "students will develop skills in conceptualizing and both visually and verbally communication theatrical designs," the assignment listed above was developed to encourage young artist to be creative within a certain set of parameters. Part of the parameters of this assignment is to study the aesthetics of design in the Japanese culture, art, architecture, religion, pop culture, etc.... Once we have established the parameters for the assignment, the students will randomly select a word or phrase, such as: Aesthetics of Japanese Architecture, Shinto, Pop Culture, Zen, No, Kabuki, Japanese Furniture, Sumo and others, and after selecting their word or phrase the students are instructed of the next steps in the assignment. I explain to the students they will be using the iconic Absolut Vodka marketing ads as their vessel for their designs and review a strict set of guidelines they must follow for their presentations. After going over the expectations of the assignment, I then review examples, good and bad, so they understand the true spirit of the assignment.

The next class period, the students will present research representing visual examples of their selected styles, at this moment the student, class and I will engage in their research to help the student narrow their ideas. After they present their research and I give them feedback, they proceed to make hand sketches of the what they are thinking. After reviewing the sketches, the student proceeds to make their final product over the next three days.

Outcomes:

The outcome of the design project is for them to start to develop good research habits, think visually with and without boundaries and start to understand the process of designing for the stage.

Japan Studies Institute Outcome:

By using the visual aesthetics of Japanese culture, this will enable the students to research Japan cultures and start to develop, understand and build a desire to study the culture of Japan. Thusly, this will also allow the students to study some elements of No and Kabuki before the student is required to take two semesters of Theatre History, which will have three to four weeks of covering Japanese Theatre in their second semester of Theatre History. Other options for the student will be able to study will be a course called World Theatre: Japanese Theatre, which will be a fifteen-week course coving in detail No/Kyogen, Kabuki, Banraku, and contemporary Japanese theatre. The second option the students will be able to study, hopefully, will be a course called Japanese film, which will study the rise of films in Japan pre- and post WWII.