

Statement on Teaching and Advising for Lucas Granholm

Teaching students how to create and implement lighting design requires both trust in their instructor's guidance and confidence in their own creative eye, which is why I place students and their ideas at the center of the learning process. I foster an environment free from negative criticism, where students are encouraged to see their creativity as having value beyond the classroom and are challenged to grow through thoughtful experimentation rather than judged solely on the end product. In my courses at the University of Minnesota Morris, ranging from core foundational classes to rotating electives, I emphasize that all design elements work in tandem to create a unified production. While my expertise is in lighting design, I often integrate it into courses where lighting is not the focal point, and I adapt material to fit the needs and interests of each student cohort, as I have found this fosters deeper engagement and appreciation for the art form. Ultimately, my goal is to help students develop into disciplined and reflective designers over their time learning from me.

I focus on three hallmarks: *Concept* - to view one's work through the eyes of the playwright/director; *Artistry* - to think creatively and objectively to solve the design problem at hand; and *Craft* - to work within the skill sets given to a young designer and to apply them appropriately.

Concept - I believe a student's creative work begins and ends with a concept. I often stress to students, "a concept is a lens from which one views the world they are creating." This is a crucial fact when designing a production because all ideas derive from this concept. If a student's choices do not adhere to the directorial or authorial concept they are trying to create or support, the whole project falls apart.

Artistry - Often when working in a theatrical environment we are asked to provide solutions to problems that arise in a script. Students must think creatively to solve these problems. My teaching facilitates ways in which students can ask questions, be creative, and be generally curious about the matter at hand. Often the answer students are looking for requires them to play just as a painter on canvas would, quietly contemplate on their choices, or simply discuss in an environment where ideas are traded amongst one another to find the solution to the problem at hand. I accomplish this through the use of in class studio days, wherein students are free to explore and contemplate their ideas while I am present to guide them and answer questions.

Craft - Learning to be a lighting designer requires mastery of a large variety of tools and equipment. This mastery not only includes the use of tools/equipment, but also how to safely utilize and handle them. While teaching how to implement designs, I stress the need for the respect and the patience required to master this craft. My lectures often include demonstrations

that start at a rudimentary level wherein students can master the basic techniques and then build upon them.

Lighting Design: Lighting Design at its core has existed since storytelling began; the basic idea of being able to see the action onstage is something that has been necessary since actors or dancers stepped foot on the stage. However, Lighting Design and how we see and use it today is a relatively newer artform. Theatrical Lighting Designers are now able to design and implement a large variety of highly complex and networked LED systems and can help to elevate a theatrical performance. While new technical innovations in lighting technology aid in creating more exciting stage pictures, it is also important to remember the hallmarks of how lighting impacts the perception of a theatrical piece.

Lighting design is an ever changing artform, and is becoming increasingly computerized. This is particularly true with the advent of LED technology. To be a Lighting Designer in today's industry requires specialized knowledge regarding data systems, power distribution, and computer programming. As a teacher and designer, I am constantly trying to bridge the gap between technology and artistry in this artform, while still keeping a firm footing in both areas. To close this gap, I often utilize a mix of different approaches in the classroom such as utilizing a light lab, scale models, and the creation of TH 3308 Advanced Lighting Design, to train students on the detail-oriented points of lighting technology with industry standard technology.

Safety: Theatre design is inherently dangerous, and can often lead to short or long term injury if proper protocol is not met. Safety is a key point that I stress in my courses and it is my goal that students leave my courses with the knowledge to safely and successfully execute designs while utilizing complex rigging equipment as well as data and power systems.

ADVISING:

Serving as an advisor is a great responsibility that I do not take lightly. I want to be students' point of contact for guidance throughout their education, and for students to trust the guidance I give them. As many of my advisees are theatre arts majors, I am often working with them either in production or they are enrolled in one of my courses. Because of this, I am able to quickly reach out to the students and grow lasting connections beyond the classroom, creating a rapport that can grow into creative partnerships. I encourage students to look at other areas beyond theatre so they can further develop their creative eye.

Other Advising: Since 2020 I have served as the faculty advisor for Meiningens Student Theatre, a co-curricular club supported by the Theatre Arts Discipline. Advising this student organization involves working with the elected student leaders on how to create and implement workshops, conference trips, and full productions that best fit within the Theatre Arts Discipline's yearly schedule. Additionally, each year, I mentor four to eight students on various

artistic projects that feed directly into the Theatre Arts Discipline productions. These projects include assisting me with my design work or mentoring a student leading a design element for themselves. While advising these students I make sure they produce work that is worthy to be presented as part of their artistic portfolios. Furthermore, I mentor students in the preparation of their third year portfolios, an academic benchmark required for the major. Working with students on their portfolios is a very interesting process, often because the students have cross-disciplinary interests that feed into their artistic work. Working with students in this capacity affords me the opportunity to talk to them like working artists in their respective fields, which is a rewarding process.