



THEA 3043-COSTUME CRAFTS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Class Type: Face-to-face
Course Code: THEA 3043
Department: Dance and Theatre
College: College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Instructor: Alex Heder
Semester: Fall 2025
Class Schedule: MW 9:30am-11:50am
Location: RTFP 251
Office Hours: RTFP 252 MW 1pm-3:30pm or by appointment
Contact Information: alex.heder@unt.edu
(Email is the best and fastest way to get ahold of me.
Canvas is next to useless in this regard.)

This hands-on course explores specialized techniques used in the creation of costume crafts for theatre, film, and themed entertainment. Students will gain skills in **leatherworking, sculpting/molding, foam and thermoplastics, beading and embroidery**. The skills are meant to build upon one another, meaning one skill can be used to embellish and enrich another. The course emphasizes:

1. The proper and safe handling of various tools, adhesives, paints and other materials.
2. The execution of proper technique.
3. The application of various materials in the pursuit of visual storytelling.



REQUIRED MATERIALS

- ☐ Students are **not** required to purchase or provide any textbooks or materials
- ☐ Craft materials provided by the University will remain property of the University. Students wishing to keep their finished projects should consider purchasing materials for their projects. A list for materials is included with every project description.
- ☐ A smock or apron to protect clothing from hazardous and staining materials.
- ☐ Respirator masks with 3M 6006 multi-gas cartridge or the 3M 60926 multi-gas/P100 cartridge. These can be found at most hardware stores and shopping centers with a paint/hardware section.

ATTENDANCE

In Theatre and film, when you don't show up, the whole production suffers. We aim to use best practices in all aspects of our education therefore it is paramount that you prioritize attendance. The class is structured so you can benefit from more 1-on-1 instruction and you can't effectively learn what I intend to teach you if you're not here. Given the depth of the course, you will find the workload much more manageable if you prioritize attendance.

You will receive full points for the day if you are on time ready to participate in class. I understand things happen, they will undoubtedly "happen" to me too. Therefore you will not be marked late until **20 minutes after the start of class** which is approximately the time between buses. Which means missing your bus is not a valid excuse. Time management is one of if not THE most important skills of your life.

You are allowed **3 unexcused absence** no questions asked. Use this day for mental health, or an extra long weekend with your family or your sweetheart. At the end of the semester everyone gets one absence forgiven automatically.

Sick days. Obviously if you're sick DO NOT COME TO CLASS. Send me an email letting me know, make an appointment with me if you need help catching up after you feel better. However, If you miss more than 3 class periods due to sickness it will begin to hurt your grade. The only exceptions are serious cases excused by a doctor's note, in which case deadlines may be altered to help you catch up on days you missed while sick. This will be on a case by case basis. So take care of yourselves, y'all. Drink water, get enough sleep, and don't lick things that ought not be licked.

For all other absences excused by the university or extenuating circumstances, communication is key. The sooner I know about it the sooner I can prepare you for and/or help you succeed.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Everyone is expected to readily participate in class. Failure to do so will forfeit that student's attendance points for the day. With that commitment, a student can expect a consistent and safe learning environment where their opinions will be acknowledged and respected. As there is no one right answer in design, I expect students to feel like they can bring variety and perspective to the classroom.

ASSIGNMENTS

Samplers

Before students jump head first into a project, they will demonstrate workable knowledge of requisite techniques. Samplers are small scale practice pieces that are unique to each area of costume craft we will be studying.

Proposals/Reports

Project Proposals: After the completion of the Sampler, students will compose a brief "project proposal" dictating the parameters of their project. The Proposal must include:

- ☐ a written paragraph detailing their intended process to complete the project
- ☐ a rough sketch of the intended design of a project, and
- ☐ an estimated time to completion.

Alternative Method Report: The students will be asked to submit one report on an alternative method of crafting. Costume craft is often relegated to "make it work" scenarios and sometimes you don't have the time, money, or materials to use conventional methods. The students will research alternate methods of craft techniques that could be used in place of one of the skills we learn in class. I suggest you use a narrow search margin. Don't just look up "Alternative crafting methods." But rather something like, "Quick and easy fake embroidery for cosplay." This report has no length or format requirement but I will be looking for the following criteria:

1. The name of your alternative method.
2. Describe which technique(s) your method can be used to replace.
3. The process step by step.
4. What are some applications you can dream up for this technique

Projects

Project 1-Sword Frog: A sword frog is a leather housing for a sword scabbard. This project must demonstrate:

- ☐ Leather that has been properly cut, no knicks in the leather.
- ☐ Some kind of stamping or tooling to the surface of the leather
- ☐ A smooth and consistent dye job, and protective finish
- ☐ A burnished edge to the leather
- ☐ Correct assembly with well properly administered adhesives, rivets, and or stitching.

Project 2-The mask: students will demonstrate an understanding of how to use air dry clays and polymers or other sculptable materials to create masks. For full points the mask must:

- ☐ Use some form of air dry clay or sculpting material effectively without it crumbling or falling off the base.
- ☐ Have a casted element that wasn't sculpted straight onto the mask but glued or added to it mechanically.
- ☐ A sealing and a paint job.
- ☐ A thermoplastic, foam, or leather component
- ☐ It must stay on the face by one t-strap elastic. Masks that are too heavy will fail this parameter.

Project 3 Armor: students will construct a piece of armor of their choosing using eva foam and thermoplastics. This project must include:

- ☐ An eva foam base cut, trued, and constructed with proper application of rubber cement.
- ☐ Filled, hidden, or disguised seams.
- ☐ A proper application of thermoplastic
- ☐ A proper finish and paint job
- ☐ The straps must be functional and strong.

Project 4-Embellishment. Students must select a garment either from their own closet, or from stock on which to add a beaded and embroidered element. For full points this project must:

- ☐ Be properly interfaced and prepped.
- ☐ include 3 of the embroidery stitches we practiced on the samplers
- ☐ Have a beaded element to it.
- ☐ Meet or exceed a total area of 16 square inches.

Project 5-Final Project: Students will create an original costume craft project. This project must:

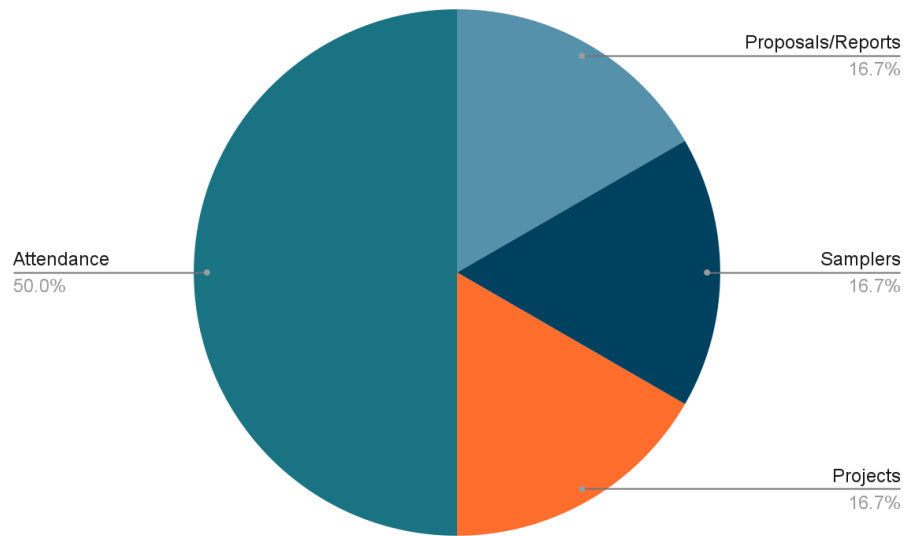
- ☐ Include 3 of the 4 costume craft elements we studied this semester
- ☐ 1 alternative method not studied in class. This can be 3d printing, cricut cut stencils, etching whatever you want. It does not have to be the method you researched on your report.
- ☐ It has to tell a story. EXAMPLE: a leather piece of armor with battle damage and a blood stain that tells a story of a barbaric warrior that met with a grizzly fate. Use your skills to tell me about a character with a paint job, weathering, material, etc.give us some insight into who might be wearing it.



LATE/MISSING WORK

My policy for late and missing work is simple: if you get it into me before I grade it, it's not late or missing. HOWEVER, do not bank on my inability to grade on time. You might get lucky but do you really wanna risk it? Late work gradually loses more and more points the longer it takes to turn in, so if something slips by, don't let it get worse. In theatre, if your work is late, it holds up the whole production. Be a team player and be punctual with assignments. Remember, your reputation as a theatre practitioner starts now!

GRADING BREAKDOWN



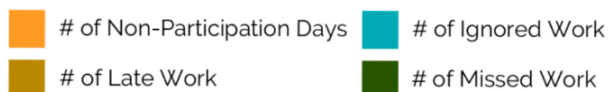
UNGRADING SYSTEM

What is an upgrading system? It's a system based on the work of Asao B. Inoue. Simply put, **if you do all the work required of you and it meets the minimum requirements, then you are guaranteed a "B"** in this class. Why not an "A"? Well since we are artists I can't really grade your artistry or talent or how good your work is. Something so subjective is too amorphous and non quantifiable. But I *can* grade whether or not you got the work done. Therefore, all assignments will be pass/fail. All points or points awarded. This affords students two privileges. 1.) If you turn in the assignment you will never have to worry about your grade. You won't have to check with me on how you're doing you'll always know. "Did I turn that in? Yes? I'm getting a B. No? I'm getting less than that." 2.) I afford students the right to do it til it's done. If you fail to meet requirements you can always fix your work and resubmit assignments. I hope this will incentivize you to turn something in even if it's not done, and focus on the art of what we do, not what someone says about it.

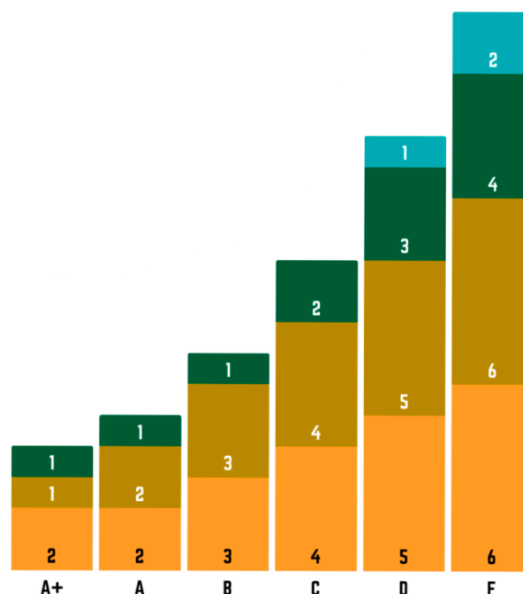
There are assignments linked to each project that if done on your own time will bump your grade from B to A. The vast majority of class requirements can be completed during class time. So that extra effort OUTSIDE of class is what bumps up your grade. Do more work, get more reward. Simple as that. This might be extra craft work to get more experience. It might be learning an additional skill we didn't talk about in class, a report on a technique or material or even just a challenge to add to the project you're working on for class. The point is my system rewards those who are committed and passionate enough to go the extra mile. These **"A" assignments** have no due date but I wouldn't recommend leaving them til the last minute. That's never a good idea and a wicked bad habit to entertain. Students who get A's in my classes receive preferential consideration for design and leadership opportunities for the upcoming season. If you're truly considering a career in the arts, I hope you will insist on being an A student.

BREAKDOWN OF MAIN COMPONENTS

Below is a table that shows the main components that affect your successful compliance with our contract.



To earn a "B" you will have no more than 3 non-participation days/absences, 3 late assignments, 1 missed assignment, and 0 ignored assignments



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STANDARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

GenAI STATEMENT

"I recognize that AI is quickly becoming a reality in the lives of artists. encourage students to use AI ethically in accordance with the academic integrity standards of UNT. I believe that AI isn't going anywhere and, if not harnessed, will replace talented artists. Therefore, I accept the use of AI generated images in instances of evocative research and moodboards. GenAI writing is only acceptable for improving original work, not replacing it. Unethical uses of AI will be taken seriously and may result in sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University based on severity of infraction. We are artists, let us use technology to aid, not replace us."

-Alex Heder

ADA ACCOMODATION STATEMENT

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

COURSE SAFETY PROCEDURES

While working in laboratory sessions, students enrolled in THEA 1043 are required to follow proper safety procedures and guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that UNT is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance. Brochures for student

insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If students have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, they should be sure that the plan covers treatment at this facility. If students choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, they may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. Students are responsible for expenses incurred there.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

SURVIVOR ADVOCACY

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.



Weekly Schedule

*I reserve the right to change the dates and due dates as I deem necessary for the fulfillment of course objectives.

****Asynchronous days are highlighted. We will not meet in class. Students will do online instruction via videos on canvas.**

Week 1	August 18th	Monday: Syllabus Day, Safety talk.	
		Wednesday: Visit Makers Space in library *Return to class with extra time and begin Leather instruction.	
Week 2	August 25th	Monday: Leather Instruction-Tooling	Assign: Leather Sampler
		Wednesday: Leather instruction dying/finishing	
Week 3	September 1st	Monday: LABOR DAY NO CLASS	

		Wednesday: Leather instruction-Fastening	
Week 4	September 8th	Monday: Leather Frog Work Day	Due: Leather Sampler Assign: Sword Frog
		Wednesday:Leather Frog Work Day	
Week 5	September 15th	Monday: Sculpture-air dry clays *foam clay *Air dry clay *Epoxy Sculpt	Due: Leather Frog Assign: Mask
		Wednesday: Molding/Casting-Mold Making and clay positives • Basics of Casting	
Week 6	September 22nd	Monday:Sculpture/molding-sealing and Painting (dry brush technique) • Sculpture/molding work day	
		Wednesday: Sculpture/molding work day	
Week 7	September 29th	Monday:Lecture- Alternative Methods	Assign: Alternative Methods Report
		Wednesday:Foam/Thermoplastics-patterning and cutting, heat guns	Assign: Foam/Thermoplastics sampler
Week 8	October 6th MIDTERMS	Monday: Foam/Thermoplastics-disguising seams	
		Wednesday: Foam/Thermoplastics-adhering methods 2 points of contact rule	
Week 9	October 13th	Monday: Foam/Thermoplastics- Sealing and Painting techniques	
		Wednesday: Foam/Thermoplastics: Straps, buckles and adornment	Assign: Armor
Week 10	October 20th	Monday: Foam/Thermoplastics: work day	Due: Foam/Thermoplastics sampler
		Wednesday: Foam/Thermoplastics: work day	
Week 11	October 27th	Monday: Asynchronous learning: Beading/Embroidery- Embroidery Stitches	Assign: Embroidery sampler
		Wednesday:Asynchronous learning: Beading/Embroidery-Embroidery stitches	
Week 12	November 3rd	Monday:Asynchronous learning: Beading/Embroidery-Beading	
		Wednesday:Asynchronous learning: Beading/Embroidery-Beading	Assign: Embellishment Project
Week 13	November 10th	Monday: Beading/Embroidery work day	Due: Armor Due: Embroidery Sampler Assign: Final Project Proposals
		Wednesday: Beading/Embroidery work day	
Week 14	November 17th	Monday: Begin Final Projects	Due: Final project proposals Assign: Final project

		Wednesday: Final Project Work Day	Due: Embellishment Project
Week 15	November 24th	THANKSGIVING BREAK NO CLASS	
Week 16	December 1st	Monday: Final Project Work Day	Due: Alternative Methods report
		Wednesday: Final Project Work Day	
Week 17	December 8th	Monday: NO CLASS	
		Wednesday: FINAL 8am-10am	Final Project Due

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