



THA-122: STAGE MAKEUP

Effective Term

Fall 2026

BOT Approval Date

12/11/2025

Discipline

THA - Theater Arts

Course Number

122

Course Title

Stage Makeup

Short Title

Stage Makeup

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units

Lecture Units

1.00

Lab Units

2.00

Total Units

3.00

Hours

Lecture Contact Hours

16-18

Out of Class Hours Lecture

32-36

Lab Contact Hours

96-108

Out of Class Hours Lab

0.00

Total Contact Hours

112 - 126

Total Out of Class Hours

32 - 36

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Is this an existing Extensive Lab?

No

Do you want to propose this for Extensive Lab?

No

Distance Education

No

C-ID (Admin Only)

C-ID THTR 175

Catalog Description

This course provides an in-depth exploration of stage makeup techniques and materials, emphasizing practical application and inclusive design. Students will learn makeup application for diverse skin tones and facial structures, medium selection, color theory, realistic and corrective techniques, character transformation, and introductory prosthetic application. The course also examines the historical, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of makeup design for various theatrical productions, fostering an appreciation for diverse artistic traditions and inclusive representation in stage performance.

Codes**TOP Code (CB 03)**

1006.00* - *Technical Theater

CIP Code

50.0507 - Directing and Theatrical Production.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Drama/Theater Arts (Masters Required)	End

Learning Objectives**Learning Objectives**

Learning Objective
1. Distinguish terminology commonly associated with theatrical make up design and execution.
2. Demonstrate the safe practices used in make up application, such as proper handling and sharing of make up and make up tools.
3. Analyze the creative and practical aspects of make up for the theater from concept to application.
4. Analyze and evaluate historical stage makeup styles across different cultures and time periods, identifying their artistic techniques, cultural significance, and impact on theatrical storytelling.
5. Recognize, define, label, and describe the tools, equipment and materials necessary in make up design and application.
6. Assess and demonstrate the various functions of make up as they apply to realistic, corrective, age, character, and non-realistic designs.
7. Evaluate and assess the necessary paperwork in order to implement a make up design.
8. Analyze a play and draw a basic make up design with appropriate facial anatomy and color chart as used in theatrical production.

Learning Outcome Information**Course Learning Outcomes**

Learning Outcome
1. Students will distinguish and differentiate terminology commonly associated with theatrical make-up design and execution
2. Students will demonstrate and apply the functions of various theatrical make-up products.

3. Students will develop the knowledge of the care and maintenance of make-up tools and equipment
4. Students will demonstrate the fundamental skills of designing and applying a theatrically appropriate stage makeup look, considering diverse skin tones, historical accuracy, character interpretation, and inclusive representation.

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. **Major Function of Makeup & Why We Use Theatrical Makeup in the Entertainment Industry**
 - a. Emphasize how makeup can enhance visibility on stage while maintaining the integrity of diverse racial and ethnic features.
 - b. Discuss historical biases in theatrical makeup, including the problematic history of racial misrepresentation (e.g., blackface, yellowface) and the importance of cultural sensitivity.
 - c. Highlight the role of makeup in authentically portraying a diverse range of characters without erasing or altering essential identity markers.
2. **Stage vs. Film or Photography Makeup Applications and Products**
 - a. Address how different skin tones interact with stage vs. camera lighting and the need for inclusive product lines that cater to all skin tones.
 - b. Discuss how historical lack of diversity in makeup formulations has impacted performers of color and how modern brands are addressing these gaps.
3. **Effects of Lighting on Makeup & Counteracting Distance**
 - a. Demonstrate how different lighting temperatures (warm, cool, neutral) can affect various skin tones.
 - b. Teach students how to adjust foundation, contour, and highlights to ensure that actors of all ethnic backgrounds look natural under different lighting setups.
4. **Bringing the Character to Life & Survey of Historical Styles and Products**
 - a. Include discussions on diverse beauty standards throughout history and across cultures.
 - b. Avoid Eurocentric beauty norms and highlight indigenous, African, Asian, Latinx, and Middle Eastern makeup traditions used in historical theater.
5. **Facial Anatomy, The Skull, Face and Head Shapes, Facial Structure**
 - a. Recognize natural variations in bone structure across different ethnic groups.
 - b. Avoid teaching contouring as a means of conforming to Eurocentric beauty ideals. Instead, focus on enhancing natural facial features.
6. **Light and Shade: Highlighting & Shading**
 - a. Teach contouring and highlighting in a way that complements diverse features rather than erasing or reshaping them to fit a single aesthetic ideal.
 - b. Show students how different skin tones reflect and absorb light uniquely and require different highlight/shading approaches.
7. **Application of Makeup & Blending**
 - a. Encourage the use of diverse shade ranges to avoid "white-casting" or "ashiness" on darker skin.
 - b. Discuss inclusive product choices and techniques that work across a spectrum of skin tones.
8. **Color Theory for Pigment & Overview of Basic Color Theory**
 - a. When discussing primary, secondary, and complementary colors, include examples across varied skin tones to show how different hues interact.
 - b. Teach students how to neutralize undertones appropriately for different racial/ethnic groups.
9. **Matching Skin Tones**
 - a. Offer guidance on selecting makeup for various undertones (cool, warm, neutral, olive, golden, red, blue, etc.) across all racial backgrounds.
 - b. Discuss the challenges that performers of color face due to historically limited foundation ranges and how to mix/customize shades.
10. **Optical Illusion in Makeup**
 - a. Teach corrective techniques while respecting natural beauty and cultural features, rather than conforming to a Westernized standard.
 - b. Show students how different face and feature shapes exist across all ethnicities and should be enhanced, not altered.
11. **Character Analysis & Script Breakdown**
 - a. Discuss how racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds impact character portrayal and makeup choices.
 - b. Address stereotyping in character makeup and how to avoid offensive or inaccurate portrayals.
 - c. Teach students to research a character's cultural, economic, and social background before making makeup decisions.
12. **Non-Human Characters and Prosthetics**
 - a. Discuss potential racially insensitive designs (e.g., avoiding fantasy makeup that unintentionally mimics or appropriates real-world cultural aesthetics).
 - b. Encourage research into cultural mythology and folklore to respectfully incorporate elements into character designs.

13. Design of Makeup & Procedures

- a. Stress collaboration with diverse voices, including actors, directors, and cultural consultants.
- b. Encourage students to research historically accurate representations of different ethnicities and cultures rather than relying on assumptions.

14. Commitment, Analysis, and Research (Primary & Secondary)

- a. Urge students to analyze historical and cultural contexts behind their makeup choices.
- b. Advocate for using primary sources (portraits, cultural texts, historical records) rather than relying on biased Western interpretations of beauty and character representation.

15. Implementation & Evaluation

- a. Teach students to evaluate their own work through a DEI lens, ensuring their makeup designs respect cultural and racial identities.
- b. Encourage feedback from performers and directors regarding authenticity and inclusivity.

Course Lab Content**1. Application of Makeup**

- a. Techniques for applying makeup on diverse skin tones and facial structures.
- b. Consideration of cultural and historical influences on application methods.
- c. Types of Makeup Products
- d. Greasepaint, Crème, Pancake: Inclusive shade ranges and product options for various undertones.
- e. Ingredients: Understanding allergens and cultural/religious restrictions on certain ingredients.
- f. Usage: Best practices for makeup application on different skin types.
- g. Types of Sponges and Their Usage
- h. Consideration of different textures for better application across skin tones.
- i. Sponges versus brushes for applying makeup on diverse features.
- j. Proper Makeup Removal and Cleansing
- k. Consideration of sensitive skin needs across different ethnic backgrounds.
- l. Best practices for removing heavy stage makeup while preserving skin integrity.

m. Beauty Makeup

- n. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - i. Current trends in beauty makeup, including the inclusion of non-Eurocentric aesthetics.
 - ii. Classic beauty makeup across different cultures.
- o. Base Selection and Application
 - i. Matching foundation to various undertones and skin tones.
 - ii. Mixing colors for inclusivity in productions.
- p. Shading and Highlight Application
 - i. Contouring techniques that enhance rather than alter natural features.
- q. Cheek and Lip Color Application
 - i. Addressing historical biases in "universal" shades.
 - ii. Matching appropriate color palettes for a range of complexions.

2. Corrective Makeup

- a. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - i. Corrective techniques for diverse face shapes and features.
 - ii. Ethical considerations in altering facial features.
 - iii. Camouflage products and their use for various skin tones.
- b. Tattoo & Beard Coverage
 - i. Addressing color matching for varying skin tones.
- c. Middle Age and Old Age Makeup
- d. Theory of Aging Across Cultures
 - i. Understanding how different ethnicities age uniquely.
 - ii. Environmental, hereditary, and health influences on aging.
- e. Application Techniques
 - i. Wrinkle and age mark application with attention to natural variation across racial backgrounds.
 - ii. Consideration of hereditary and ethnic variations in facial aging.
- f. Three-Dimensional Makeup Application
 - i. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - 1. Inclusive practices for designing 3D makeup for diverse facial structures.
 - 2. Product considerations for hypoallergenic and religiously acceptable choices.

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- g. Facial Hair
 - i. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - 1. Historical styles in facial hair across different cultures.
 - 2. Preparation of crepe wool and human hair with respect for texture and curl patterns.
 - 3. Application Techniques
 - a. Creating natural beards and mustaches that respect diverse hair growth patterns.
 - b. Methods for achieving natural hairlines across different ethnicities.
 - 4. Research Methods for Makeup
 - a. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - i. Historical accuracy in theatrical makeup across cultures.
 - ii. Ethical research techniques for representing diverse backgrounds.
 - 5. Special Effects Makeup Applications
 - a. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - i. Analysis of culturally sensitive SFX applications.
 - ii. Avoiding stereotypical or offensive prosthetic and makeup choices.
 - b. Application of Special Effects Techniques
 - i. Consideration of realistic versus stylized wounds for different skin tones.
 - ii. Camouflage techniques adapted for varying undertones.
 - 6. Stylized vs. Realistic Makeup
 - a. Lecture and Discussion on:
 - i. Fantasy and science fiction makeup without cultural appropriation.
 - ii. Inclusive techniques for creating elves, gnomes, fairies, and other mythical beings.
 - 7. Period Makeup
 - a. Research Techniques Unique to Period Makeup
 - i. Eighteenth-century makeup techniques from global perspectives.
 - ii. Recreating historical makeup with respect to diverse beauty standards.
 - 8. Assembling a Makeup Morgue
 - a. Organizing References for Inclusive Design
 - i. Collecting images that reflect a range of racial, ethnic, and historical contexts.
 - ii. Using makeup morgues to support diverse casting and authentic representation.

Methods of Instruction

Method

Activity

Integration

Practical application of stage makeup design theory through analyzing a theatrical text, researching historical and cultural influences, and developing an inclusive makeup design that considers diverse character portrayals, skin tones, and facial structures.

Method

Directed Study

Integration

Directed study of safety procedures and proper application of make up products used in theatrical make up design.

Method

Film/video Viewing and Discussion

Integration

In-class video presentations on specific topics pertinent to make up design and practicum, followed by instructor-guided discussion.

Method

Lecture

Integration

Lecture and presentation on theatrical terminology, production staff, and production planning.

Method

Observation and Demonstration

Integration

Observation and demonstration of make up products necessary to implement a theatrical make up design.

Methods of Evaluation**Method**

Capstone Project

Integration

Students will be evaluated on their ability to complete a comprehensive character analysis and makeup design sheet based on a play script, incorporating factors such as heredity, race, ethnicity, environment, personality, disposition, personal habits, health, age, and cultural context. Emphasis will be placed on historical accuracy, inclusive representation, and ethical considerations in character portrayal. Students will then demonstrate their proficiency by applying the makeup design to another individual, showcasing their technical skills in color matching, shading, highlighting, prosthetics, and period-specific techniques.

Method

Class Participation

Integration

Students will be evaluated on their practical contribution to the theatrical design process through the creation and execution of a make up design for an MSJC production, with minimal correction from the instructor.

Method

Class Work

Integration

Students will be evaluated on their skill in analyzing the various aspects of a make up design and their ability to apply make up to another individual from these documents, with minimal correction from the instructor.

Method

Projects

Integration

Students will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate safe application of make up products and identify the proper tools needed for a specific task in relation to the make up design.

Method

Quizzes

Integration

Students will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate and employ theater terminology in quizzes throughout the semester.



Assignments

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

1. Make-up Project: Research and develop a makeup design for a historically or culturally significant character, demonstrating your understanding of character analysis, historical accuracy, color theory, and inclusive representation.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Practice a specific stage makeup technique each week and reflect on your process, challenges, and improvements.

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Create a character makeup concept sheet, including a sketched face chart, historical and cultural research summary, and a written justification of makeup choices, to demonstrate your understanding of character analysis, color theory, and inclusive representation before applying it in a practical setting.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Each week, read the assigned sections from the required textbook "Stage Make-up" to deepen your understanding of makeup theory, technique, and cultural context. After completing each reading, write a concise chapter summary that identifies key concepts, methods, and historical or cultural influences. Reflect on how these ideas inform inclusive and equitable design practices—recognizing diverse skin tones, facial structures, gender expressions, and global traditions—and explain how the material connects to the week's practical makeup applications and class discussions.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Corson, R., J. Glavan, B. Norcross (2019). Stage Makeup 11th edition Routledge. ISBN: 978-0367183325
Davis, G., M. Hall (2017). The Makeup Artist Handbook 3rd edition Focal Press. ISBN: 978-1138200562
Sobel, S (2016). Theatrical Makeup: Basic Application Techniques 1st edition Focal Press. ISBN: 9781138798762

Other Resources

Students will need to research theatre productions/films for some assignments and capstone project.

Class Size Information

Class Size

32

Class Size Category

F - Individualized, skills#based instruction/field practice 30

Diversity and Inclusion

Course Design and Materials: Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

Accessible Instruction: Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

Equitable Teaching Practices: Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement: Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

The course integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by emphasizing makeup techniques for diverse skin tones, facial structures, and cultural aesthetics, ensuring that all students learn to create authentic and respectful character representations. Historical and contemporary makeup practices are explored through a global perspective, challenging Eurocentric beauty norms and promoting inclusive design choices. Students engage in ethical discussions, research-based analysis, and practical applications to develop makeup artistry that reflects the rich diversity of theatrical storytelling

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

The course is designed to be equitable and inclusive by incorporating assignments, instruction, and evaluations that recognize and respect diverse skin tones, facial structures, and cultural aesthetics. Students engage in contextualized learning through research-based projects that explore historical and global makeup traditions, ensuring that makeup application is not limited to Eurocentric beauty standards. Instruction includes individualized feedback and adaptive teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles, allowing students to develop their technical skills at their own pace. Evaluations prioritize creativity, research depth, and ethical considerations in character representation rather than rigid aesthetic norms. Class discussions and interactions encourage cultural awareness and critical thinking, fostering an environment where students learn to apply makeup ethically and inclusively in theatrical productions.

Interactions**Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.**

The course fosters student-to-student interaction through peer critiques, collaborative projects, and hands-on application exercises, where students practice makeup techniques on each other and provide constructive feedback. Group discussions and research presentations encourage the exchange of diverse perspectives, allowing students to learn about historical and cultural influences on makeup design. Additionally, paired and small-group activities promote skill-sharing, problem-solving, and teamwork, ensuring an interactive and inclusive learning environment.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

The course incorporates instructor-to-student interaction through hands-on demonstrations, individualized feedback, and real-time guidance during makeup application exercises. The instructor provides personalized critiques, helping students refine their techniques based on skin tones, facial structures, and character design considerations. Additionally, students receive one-on-one support during research projects, historical makeup analysis, and script-based character transformations, ensuring an inclusive and skill-building learning experience tailored to their unique artistic development.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

The course promotes student-to-content interaction through hands-on makeup application, research-based character analysis, and historical studies of theatrical makeup traditions. Students engage with course content by practicing techniques, experimenting with different products, and analyzing how lighting, facial structure, and cultural influences impact stage makeup design. Through assignments like face charts, script breakdowns, and live demonstrations, students actively apply theoretical knowledge to practical work, ensuring a comprehensive and immersive learning experience.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

The course encourages student-to-self interaction through self-reflection exercises, personal makeup application, and critical analysis of their own work. Students will assess their progress by documenting their techniques, evaluating their skill development, and considering how their artistic choices align with historical, cultural, and character-based research. Additionally, through self-critiques and journaling, students will explore their creative growth, problem-solving strategies, and ethical considerations in makeup design, fostering deeper personal engagement with the craft.

Key: 2858