

**THAR 127.4 Course Outline as of Fall 2021****CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: THAR 127.4 Title: PROPS WKSHP WEAPONS

Full Title: Properties Workshop: Weaponry and Specialty Items

Last Reviewed: 4/26/2021

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	2.00	Lecture Scheduled	1.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	17.50
Minimum	2.00	Lab Scheduled	3.00	8	Lab Scheduled	52.50
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	4.00		Contact Total	70.00
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 35.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 105.00

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade Only

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly:

**Catalog Description:**

This course provides intermediate instruction in the skills involved in the design, coordination, and construction of stage properties (commonly called props), with a focus on theatrical weaponry and specialty props. Students will work on focus-related projects, as well as properties for SRJC productions.

**Prerequisites/Corequisites:**

Course Completion of THAR 27

**Recommended Preparation:****Limits on Enrollment:****Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: This course provides intermediate instruction in the skills involved in the design, coordination, and construction of stage properties (commonly called props), with a focus on theatrical weaponry and specialty props. Students will work on focus-related projects, as well as properties for SRJC productions. (Grade Only)

Prerequisites/Corequisites: Course Completion of THAR 27

Recommended:  
Limits on Enrollment:  
Transfer Credit:  
Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

## **ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:**

<b>AS Degree:</b>	<b>Area</b>	Effective:	Inactive:
<b>CSU GE:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b>	Effective:	Inactive:
<b>IGETC:</b>	<b>Transfer Area</b>	Effective:	Inactive:
<b>CSU Transfer:</b>		Effective:	Inactive:
<b>UC Transfer:</b>		Effective:	Inactive:

**CID:**

**Certificate/Major Applicable:**

Certificate Applicable Course

## **COURSE CONTENT**

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Conceptualize, communicate, organize, safely handle, and construct and/or refurbish basic theatrical weaponry and specialty props used in stage and camera productions.

### **Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Read and analyze a script with respect to historical period and style, focusing on the weaponry and specialty properties needs for a production.
2. Conduct and apply historical and stylistic research in the conceptualization of a prop design, identifying historical styles of weaponry and specialty properties needed.
3. Identify the major categories of weaponry for the stage.
4. Demonstrate creative problem solving in prop designing, including finding resources, adapting to obstacles, and working within a budget.
5. Develop strategies for implementing and restoring temporary changes to borrowed or stock weaponry or specialty items for a production.
6. Work collaboratively and communicate with a design and directorial team.
7. Formulate a plan for the selection, protection, secure storage, and maintenance of weaponry and specialty props for the run of a show.
8. Design and construct, renovate or adapt existing properties, using a variety of tools, techniques, and concepts.
9. Apply safety procedures for the handling and storage of tools and materials used to repair, refurbish, and/or construct weaponry and specialty properties for a theatrical production.
10. Mentor beginning students in the construction and management of weaponry and specialty items.

### **Topics and Scope:**

## Properties Overview Topics:

### I. Introduction

- A. Define stage properties, props master, props manager and props organization
- B. Introduction to historical styles

### II. Safety and Standards of Professionalism

- A. Shop safety
- B. Safe use of materials and equipment
- C. Explanation of MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets)
- D. The importance of protective clothing and masks
- E. Other standards of professionalism

### III. Script Analysis and Strategizing

- A. Evaluation of props requirements of an assigned play
- B. Strategizing which props can be bought, pulled from stock, or built
- C. Consideration of the play's period and socioeconomic situation in relation to props
- D. Consideration of the play's style, such as realism vs. fantasy

### IV. Research

- A. Investigate sources of historical information
- B. Discuss and investigate creative nontraditional research approaches

### V. Purchasing

- A. Budgeting
- B. Buying props
- C. Researching sources

### VI. Managing Props in Production

- A. Organization and placement
- B. Tracking
- C. Inventory and maintenance
- D. Working with actors

### VII. Working with Stock Props [Primarily Lecture]

- A. SRJC Base stock and users
- B. Considerations before making changes to stock props
  - 1. Use
    - a. How often is stock item used?
    - b. How likely is item to be used in current condition?
  - 2. Condition of item
    - a. Is item in need of repair?
    - b. Is item usable in current condition?
    - c. Will changes improve, sustain, or diminish item's quality?
  - 3. Value
    - a. How much would it cost to replace item?
    - b. How feasible is it to replace item (age, rarity, etc.)?
  - 4. Durability and "Lifespan"
    - a. Will changes withstand production demands over time?
    - b. Do changes increase or reduce longevity of item's use?
- C. Repurposing stock props
  - 1. Temporary vs permanent changes
  - 2. Where will item be stored in stock after changes?

## Workshop Focus Topics:

- I. Theatrical Weaponry [Primarily Lecture]
  - A. Brief Historical Look at Weapons
  - B. Sources of weapons for stage
    - 1. Rental houses
    - 2. In-house armory
    - 3. Fabricated
  - C. Stage combat personnel
    - 1. Fight director
    - 2. Fight captain
- II. Major Categories of Stage Weaponry [Primarily Lecture]
  - A. Swords
    - 1. Short sword
    - 2. Broad sword
    - 3. Single rapier
    - 4. Rapier and dagger
    - 5. Small swords and foils
    - 6. Other types of stage swords
      - a. Sabres
      - b. Scimitars
      - c. Others
  - B. Defensive and Impact weaponry
    - 1. Shields
    - 2. Buckler
    - 3. Axes
    - 4. Quarterstaff
    - 5. Other polearms (spears, halberds, pikes, etc.)
    - 6. Other impact weapons (truncheon, mace, baton, etc.)
  - C. Firearms
    - 1. Muskets
    - 2. Rifles
      - a. Historical (flintlock, blunderbuss, six shooter, etc.)
      - b. Contemporary
    - 3. Pistols
      - a. Historical (flintlock pistols, military revolvers, etc.)
      - b. Contemporary
    - 4. Machine guns, military guns and assault rifles
    - 5. Other firearms
  - D. Daggers and Knives
    - 1. Daggers
    - 2. Knives
      - a. Switchblades
      - b. Large knives (Bowie, Commando, etc.)
      - c. Razors
      - d. Other blade weapons
  - E. Other stage weapons
    - 1. Whips
    - 2. Specialty items
    - 3. Found objects
  - F. Related items
    - 1. Holsters
    - 2. Frogs and sheaths
    - 3. Scabbards

- 4. Baldrics and belts
- 5. Restraints
  - a. Shackles
  - b. Leg irons
  - c. Handcuffs
- 6. Weapons-related costume items
- II. Weapon Safety and Maintenance
  - A. Handling of stage weapons
    - 1. Importance of wearing gloves
    - 2. How to hold a stage weapon
  - B. Storage of weapons
  - C. Transportation of weapons
  - D. Inspection and maintenance of blade weapons
    - 1. Checking hilt (pommel, tang, etc.)
    - 2. Checking blade for breakage and visible metal fatigue
    - 3. Filing down burrs
  - E. Working with firearm blanks or blank gun ammunition
  - F. Special safety procedures when handling stage firearms
    - 1. Notification of authorities
    - 2. Checking theatre/institution regulations
    - 3. Targeting - protocols when aiming a firearm on stage
    - 4. Other safety procedures
- III. Considerations When Coordinating or Constructing Production Weapons
  - A. Style/genre of script and production
  - B. Level of skill of those using weapons
  - C. Usage
    - 1. Contact or no contact between weapons?
    - 2. Usage style
      - a. Degree of realism or stylization
      - b. Serious, serio-comic, or comedic
  - D. Proximity of audience to stage
- IV. Design and Construction of Basic Production Weapons and Accessories
  - A. Historic vs stage materials
  - B. Historic vs stage construction techniques
  - C. Safety procedures and protective equipment
  - D. Materials
    - 1. Metal
    - 2. Wood
    - 3. Leather
    - 4. Foam and other materials
  - E. Working with metal
    - 1. Types
    - 2. Tools and equipment
    - 3. Welding and soldering
    - 4. Preparing stage blades
      - a. rounding tips
      - b. dulling edges
    - 5. Metal substitutes
  - F. Working with leather
    - 1. Types of leather
    - 2. Tools and equipment
    - 3. Safety

- 4. Buckles, grommets, etc.
- 5. Leather substitutes
- V. Specialty Props
  - (This topic may expand based on specific specialty props needs for one or more SRJC productions in the semester the course is offered.)
  - A. Common genres/styles requiring specialty props
    - 1. Fantasy
    - 2. Science fiction
    - 3. Farce
    - 4. Other
  - B. Examples of specialty props
  - C. Strategies for designing and constructing specialty props
- VI. Assisting Peers in the Construction and Management of Weaponry and Specialty Items

### **Assignment:**

THAR 127.4 students will attend class with THAR 27 students and participate in class activities relating to the properties requirements for the semester's productions. However, the following assignments will focus primarily on developing skills relating to theatrical weaponry and specialty props.

Homework and class assignments:

1. Read 5-10 pages of the required material per week
2. Quiz(zes): One or more quizzes on assigned reading and/or safety issues
3. Read, analyze, and research 3-4 assigned plays from a property designer's viewpoint. Scripts will include 2-3 SRJC productions for the current semester; instructor may select 1-2 additional scripts for class discussion and exercises. With each script, the student will:
  - A. Identify required and potential props.
  - B. Develop a props list, scene by scene.
  - C. Identify the period and style of each play.
  - D. Research and collect visual images representing the period of the play.
  - E. Research the identified props within the play's period, providing images/sketches.
4. Design Team Assignment
  - Students will work in groups of 2-3 to simulate the collaborative process of a design team.
  - Assignment example:
    - A. The team is assigned one or more specific props for an upcoming production.
    - B. The team strategizes how the prop(s) will be constructed, selects appropriate materials, and applies techniques in the construction of the assigned prop(s).
5. Production Attendance Essays:
  - A. Attend 2-3 SRJC productions (Note: Students receive one free ticket per production.)
  - B. Write a 500-word essay on each play, focusing on the props used.

6. Props Purchasing Assignment:
  - A. Research 2-4 purchasing sources for an assigned object or material.
  - B. Present findings to class, including price, availability and delivery information.
7. Final Project:
 

Problem-solve, strategize, and construct an instructor-assigned prop for theatrical use relating to weaponry or special properties. (Instructor may assign a prop for a specific production or independent of any specific script or show.)
8. Professionalism - Adhere to the standards of professionalism expected in the field of properties and the course syllabus:
  - a. Arrive promptly and prepared for all class meetings, participating actively.
  - b. Maintain an amiable and supportive attitude when interacting with others (fellow students, instructor, technical director, designers, actors, stage managers, etc.)
  - c. Work collaboratively with other team members when working on group tasks.
  - d. Acknowledging the sometimes stressful and time-sensitive working environment, contribute positively by staying focused, listening closely, following instructions carefully, and taking initiative when appropriate.
  - e. Wear required work attire and safety gear, adhere to safety procedures as instructed, and strive to maintain good personal health and safety practices.

Additional Skills-Based Assignments may include:

9. Props Management Assignment:
  - A. Develop a problem-solving strategy for organizing and managing props for a production, in theory or practical application.
  - B. Document the management strategy in a 500-word paper (Strategy Paper).
10. Specialized Prop Construction Assignment(s):
 

Complete one or more weaponry or specialty properties project(s).
11. Peer assisting in the construction and management of weaponry and speciality items.

### Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

**Writing:** Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

2-3 production essays; Strategy paper (optional)
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Writing 10 - 20%
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**Problem Solving:** Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Script analysis, research, strategizing and purchasing assignments
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Problem solving 20 - 40%
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**Skill Demonstrations:** All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

Props design and construction assignments; Design Team assignment.

Skill Demonstrations  
40 - 60%

**Exams:** All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Quiz(zes) on reading/safety

Exams  
5 - 15%

**Other:** Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Professionalism (includes participation and attendance)

Other Category  
5 - 10%

### **Representative Textbooks and Materials:**

The Textbook of Theatrical Combat. Pallaziol, Richard. Weapons of Choice. 2014 (classic)

The Prop Building Guidebook: For Theatre, Film, and TV. 2nd ed. Hart, Eric. Focal Press. 2017

The Theatre Props Handbook: Second Edition. James, Thurston. Players Press. 2000 (classic)

The Prop Builders Molding and Casting Handbook. James, Thurston. Betterway Books. 1989 (classic)

Instructor prepared materials.