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## LEAH MAZUR

### TEACHING STATEMENT

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Theatre Design is the opportunity to reflect upon life events in a three-dimensional way. It provides the ability to state a triumph or a trauma with a simple aesthetic choice. Theatre Design is the avenue through which we make our darkest fears, deepest desires, and most frivolous thoughts visible with just the elements provided to us. This, to me, is the basic principle of teaching creativity, melding pedagogy with practice: provide the space to create unabashedly, foster the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with the collaborative team, focus on combining study of one area of design with another, and to bring to life the wild images and fancies students have when analyzing a script while also telling the story that is the epicenter of the design.

Fostering the ability to create across design disciplines provides students with the skillsets to not only render beautiful conceptual pieces of work, but to also comprehend the way each area of design breathes and moves with its others. In class, I focus on driving home the idea that each of the three disciplines is integral to the success of the other, and tantamount to the success of the production and telling the story. To achieve this, classrooms settings are not only a space to discuss complex design ideas, but to also put them into practice by accompanying lecture with hands-on lab time and in-class demonstrations, projects, and brainstorming sessions. Teaching additive color theory is only effective for the stage once students understand what their lights do to emphasize a design choice made by either the costume or scenic designer. Coupling immersive experimental labs in class with theoretical lecture plants the seed of comprehension for each student, no matter their learning style.

Because design can become an avenue for healing, social change, political statements, dismantling oppressive behaviors, amongst other things, it is my firm belief that a professor of design should be attentive to the emotional needs of each creative student while also maintaining the ability to foster a sense of academic achievement. In providing a safe space for *all* students -one that is rooted in the idea of diversity, equity, and inclusion- the potential for students' creativity becomes boundless.

Design is, at its core, the visual representation of an entire complex and nuanced story. It is our duty as teachers and artists to reinforce these ideas.

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