

## **Emily Mae Westerfield**

### **Teaching Philosophy Statement**

Costume design and production have many different characteristics to its art. I believe that it is essential to understand all the aspects of theatre design to become a well-rounded designer and technician. When teaching, the preparation for a professional career begins with understanding collaboration, refining your artistic abilities in both design and construction, and gaining a knowledge of personal marketing.

As an educator, developing courses that emphasize the fundamentals of costuming while exploring theatre as an art form is essential. By assessing individual talents in such courses it helps to encourage growth in areas of strength as well as weakness. These courses should include; figure drawing and rendering, costume history, script analysis, costume construction, exploration of design and research, as well as professional presentation. Through such courses, my goal is to influence communication, collaboration, time management and critical thinking to help each student reach their full potential.

In theatrical production, a “hands-on” approach is ideal for students to develop the problem solving skills necessary to be successful in the professional world. It is important to gain experience within a controlled environment to encourage self-esteem and confidence. By working in the theatre department’s costume shop, a student can understand the expectations and effort needed to make a fully realized production possible while observing faculty and peers. In the classroom, a “hands-on” approach includes projects to simulate the production process with explanation as well as demonstration. Students will develop communication skills while building up their portfolio preparing them for professional work.

As an educator, my responsibility is to my students and this begins with strong mentoring. In order to successfully mentor each student, it is important to understand what they are trying to accomplish throughout their education. By asking students to reflect and write learning goals, I am able to guide and challenge them individually. It also gives each student a focused personal investment.

When teaching costume design and production, I aim to prepare my students for a professional career with an understanding of the collaboration process, refining their artistic abilities in both design and construction, and to gain a knowledge of personal marketing. I hope to inspire artistic freedom and challenge students to reach beyond their limits in an effort to reach their full potential.