

Applebaum teaches unsung side of theater

Backstage legerdemain

For those who have always been intrigued by the hidden world of arts and drama, Clackamas Community College is offering a design and stagecraft theater sequence for the '83-84 year.

The year long course is taught by Steve Applebaum, a part-time instructor for the College. The first quarter of the course is dedicated to stagecraft. The students learn the craft of building scenery and how to direct the lighting on it, so that the scenery can be seen by the actors and audience. The class is spending some time working on the upcoming play, "The Hollow."

The second quarter has to do with the designing. "Designing has to do with taking the idea of what the scenery should look like and how it should be built and what it will look like when finished," Applebaum said.

The third quarter is "facade." The students learn to paint scenery to look like marble and other skills such as building imitation rocks. The course is an art class, but Applebaum said, "it's a practical art class because you're having to put your knowledge and skill to work."

Besides the field trips which are part of the class, there is a design contest in which all the students in the



class will participate. The students will design a set for the spring play and then the most interesting design will be chosen the winner and used for the play.

In the spring the class will help in building the set. "This way the students will get to see how a design is picked—what goes into it. They'll be part of it. They can see how a design goes from its abstract thinking to having a picture or model of it to actually building it," Applebaum said.

This is the first year Applebaum has taught this course at Clackamas. "Until recently I directed. Then I started observing directors who were incapable of talking intelligently with their designers. The director would say something like, 'I want a red set,' and the designer would think that meant fuchsia when the director was thinking of fire engine red," Applebaum said.

"... I started observing directors who were incapable of talking intelligently with their designers."

Applebaum decided he would learn enough about stagecraft and the various arts involved so that he could converse correctly with his designers. "Then I realized that stagecraft and designing were fun," he said.

"From taking this class you could design and build scenery that would be quite useful for small theater and do the project on your own. This level of instruction is what you need to put on a college show," Applebaum said.

The fact of lighting the stage is also discussed over the year. "In simplest terms the class will learn to put light where they want it and to not put it where they don't want it," he said. "That way the people who come to see the show can see it. We'll use the physics of electricity and understanding how it can help you. We'll cover lighting instruments and what they do."

Applebaum said, "I think my philosophy is that students get the best education when they take the most responsibility for it. So that the least they are told to do and most they are encouraged to do on their own, the more they will get the rewards for it."

Applebaum, who also teaches English, has worked "part-time here and there" for three years. "I think Clackamas Community College is a really nice place. All the places I've taught have been nice, but this is really nice."



TWO-BY-FOURS, glue and elbow-grease will become the garden room of an estate outside London, thanks to the stagecraft class.

Story by
Charlene Jensen
Photos by Joel Miller
&
Russ McMillen



APPLEBAUM AND STUDENT Roger Nuffer attempt to figure out a gizmo.

