University of Victoria | Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (Simon Fraser University, 2014)
BFA (University of Calgary, 2010)
Dipl. of Arts and Science (Mount Royal College, 1992)

"Undergraduate Lighting Design Curriculum and Pedagogy in Canada"

Interdisciplinary Studies

Thursday, September 12, 2019
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B007

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Monica Prendergast, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Allana Lindgren, Department of Theatre, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Michael Emme, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Kathleen Irwin, Faculty of Media, Art and Performance, University of Regina

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Neil Burford, Department of Chemistry, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to review the past and present pedagogy and curricula of theatre lighting design in Canada; the factors, values, ideas and theories that inform it; and to recommend an updated pedagogy and curriculum that reflects the trends of learning in higher education, and theatre performance in Canada in the twenty-first century. This review of and intervention in the curriculum and pedagogy of undergraduate lighting design in Canada has evolved out of a growing scenographic turn that recognizes that lighting design can and does perform independently from a theatre text. There has never been a wide-scale review of undergraduate lighting design education in Canada before this one. This research suggests that timeworn theatrical hierarchies and practices that limit equity and diversity in Canadian theatre exist in the dominant undergraduate lighting design pedagogy and curriculum; and that unchecked adherence to these systems stabilizes outdated yet persistent practices within the established institutions of university theatre departments and the professional industry.

An internet search conducted in October of 2016 and again in June of 2017 showed nineteen universities in Canada offering coursework with lighting design specific content. Each of these departments was contacted (in accordance with permission granted by the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria) and invited to contribute materials in the form of course outlines, syllabi and participate in interviews.

The institutions included in the survey have undergraduate degree granting status, are located in Canada and, offer either undergraduate course work specifically on lighting design *or* courses where lighting design is a stated component in a course. Interviewees were lighting design instructors either; currently or recently teaching at a Canadian university regardless of academic rank; or a lighting design instructor whose teaching practice has lapsed for a period of more than eighteen months, but who has distinguished themselves as a key contributor to Canadian lighting design education.

This study concludes that the present curriculum and pedagogy are significantly unchanged since the 1980s and do not reflect current trends in higher education that are cognizant of the diversity of undergraduate students in Canada or new theories in curriculum and instruction that are student-centred and -directed. Recommendations include adopting scenoturgy as a pedagogy, and using aspects of connectivism in the curriculum such as blended and distributed learning practices to teach lighting design.