

## SYLLABUS

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### A. Course Description

An introduction to the theory and practice of directing a full-length production including the director as collaborator, textual analysis, effectively communicating a director's vision, unifying design elements and concepts, casting, and facilitating stage picture composition and movement.

### B. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, each student should be able to:

1. formulate and communicate a director's vision of a particular play to a cast and crew
2. implement collaborative contexts that facilitate the creative process for all theatre artists involved in a production
3. conceptually design a well-balanced acting space for a particular production
4. effectively facilitate, create, and implement stage picture and movement concepts in the rehearsal process
5. understand both the personal and professional qualities required to be an effective director
6. direct a full-length production

## C. Course Texts

Knopf, Robert. (2006). *The Director as Collaborator*. Boston: Pearson-Allyn and Bacon.

Clurman, Harold. (1997). *On Directing*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

## D. Collateral Readings

Benedetti, Robert L. (1985) *The Director at Work*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.

Hodge, Francis and Michael McLain. (2005). *Play Directing; Analysis, Communication, and Style, sixth edition*. Boston: Pearson-Allyn and Bacon.

Longman, Stanley Vincent. (2004). *Page and Stage; An approach to Script Analysis*. Boston: Pearson-Allyn and Bacon.

## E. Course Requirements

1. Ground Plan (10%)  
**Due date: Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>**

Assuming the Providence Theatre classroom as your staging venue, and using the assigned class reading as your guide, design a ground plan for your play. Your groundplan should demonstrate an intimate knowledge of the staging requirements of the play, facilitate appropriate sight lines, and include multiple acting areas. Each student will be given 5 minutes to present their groundplan, as described above, to the class. The groundplan should be drawn on a large blank sheet (11 x 17), and handed in directly after class. Assessment will be based on the above requirements, as well as neatness and clarity.

2. Book Review (10%)  
**Due date: Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>**

Write an informal (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> person) book reaction/review of the course text, *On Directing*, by Harold Clurman. The review should demonstrate engagement with the material through identifying the relative strengths

and weaknesses of the ideas/approaches presented in it, and include a summary of what you found most helpful.  
(5 – 6 pages, doubled spaced, 12 point font)

3. Reading Checks (10 x 1% = 10%)

Each student is required to read the script of the student play being presented in preparation for the class in which it is scheduled to be presented. At the beginning of each of these classes, there will be a reading check which will consist of one or two questions for each play, designed to determine if the student has read the script. There will also be a reading check of the course lab play, *A Raisin in the Sun* (on reserve in the library: *Plays for the Theatre; A drama anthology*, by Oscar Brockett).

4. Directing a play: (35%)

This assignment is designed to allow the student to apply all of the course concepts through an independent directing experience. Choose **one** of the following two options:

- 1) direct a 20 minute scene (approx.) from a full-length play **OR**
- 2) direct a 20 minute (approx. ) One Act play

A list of suggested plays for this assignment is included in the syllabus (section E). You may select an alternate play, with prior approval from the instructor. Your play must be chosen by **Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

i) Director's Vision class presentation (15%)

**Due Date: Check Class Outline for individual student dates**

This presentation should be designed as though you are introducing your play to the cast/crew that will be involved in your production. (approx. 20 minutes in length, powerpoint required)

It should include:

1. the background of the playwright and the play
2. a discussion exploring the literary aspects of the play (complications, climax, foreshadowing, symbolism, etc.)
3. a director's exploration/explanation of the core action of the play (primary themes, ideas, dramatic question)

ii) Scene Presentation (20%)

**Due dates: Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup>, April 7<sup>th</sup>**

Direct and present the scene/play you have selected. You may choose, as your actors, students from the Directing class, or other

students you have chosen who are willing and available. You are responsible to

- i) use class concepts to communicate and incorporate your director's vision to your actors
- ii) design and implement an effective rehearsal process
- iii) introduce your scene, and then sit back while we all enjoy a brilliantly directed piece ☺

5. Acting and/or Personal Philosophy of Directing

Pick ONE of the two options below (20%):

a) Acting in another Directing student's play

**Due Date: Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Apr. 7<sup>th</sup>**

Work as an actor under the direction of one of your classmates for their scene presentation. This will include memorization of the scene selected by your classmate, committed rehearsal attendance, and performance. The assessment of this portion of your grade will be determined through consultation between the instructor and your director.

NOTE: Actors participating in your scene who are not enrolled in this class may earn a 1 cr. hr applied acting credit (with approval of the professor)

b) Personal Position Paper

**Due Date: April 7<sup>th</sup>**

A personal position paper which includes

- 1) an outline of the history and development of the role of director
- 2) the primary tasks of the role of director as it is now understood in contemporary theatre
- 3) Points 1. and 2. above, along with the personal experiences/observations of the students involvement in theatrical productions, should be used to develop and describe a personal ethic and approach to directing. It should address what a director should *do*, and what a director should *be*, along with a brief exploration of why both *doing* and *being* are necessary to the work of the director.

Option b) can only be chosen if no suitable part was available in one of the student directed scenes.

## 6. Class Participation (15%)

This course follows a seminar format in which students are both learners and teachers. The quality of the classroom experience is significantly determined by student commitment in terms of attendance, preparedness, and participation. Assessment of class participation will be based on the following:

- 1) Preparedness and participation in class discussion
  - all reserve readings must be photocopied, and an annotated copy provided for the class discussion
- 2) Audition exercise **Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>, Mar. 13<sup>th</sup>, Mar. 17<sup>th</sup>**
- 3) Attendance at *Fly Fisher's Companion*, by Canadian Playwright Michael Melski. Prairie Theatre Exchange, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm  
Cost \$10.00 – due in class on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>.  
Transportation will be provided.

Failure to attend and/or participate fully in any of the three requirements listed above will result in **0%** for the participation portion of the course requirements.

## F. Assignment Summary

Reading Checks	10%
Book Review	10%
Groundplan	10%
Directors Vision Presentation	15%
Scene Presentation	20%
Acting or Personal Philosophy	20%
Class Participation	15%

## G. Potential Plays for Scene Presentation

### Classic Works:

*Antigone*, by Sophocles  
*Candida*, by George Bernard Shaw  
*The Cherry Orchard*, by Anton Chekov  
*The Constant Wife*, by Somerset Maugham  
*The Crucible*, by Arthur Miller  
*Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller  
*The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennessee Williams

*The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde  
*The Miser*, by Moliere  
*Quiet in the Land*, by Anne Chislett  
*A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry  
*Saint Joan*, by George Bernard Shaw  
*Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett

*Arsenic and Old Lace*, by Joseph Kesselring  
*Educating Rita*, by Willy Russell  
*An Inspector Calls*, by J.B. Priestley

Contemporary Works:

*Blood Relations*, by Sharon Pollack  
*Chimera*, by Wendy Lill  
*Doubt*, by John Patrick Shanley  
*Einstein's Gift*, by Vern Thiessen  
*Half Life*, by John Mighton  
*Trying*, by Joanna McClelland Glass  
*Women of Lockerbie*, by Deborah Brevoort

One Acts

*The Valiant*, by Holworthy Hall and Robert Middlemass  
*Still Stands the House*, by Gwen Pharis Ringwood  
*Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell  
*The Appointment* by Luigi Jannuzzi  
*A Bench on the Edge*, by Luigi Jannuzzi  
*A Marriage Proposal*, by Anton Chekhov

**H. Grading Summary**

Excellent	4.0	96 – 100	A+	Satisfactory	2.5	67 – 69	C+
		90 – 95	A				
		85 – 89	A-				
Very Good	3.5	78 – 84	B+	Marginal	1.0	60 – 62	C-
						57 – 59	D+
						53 – 56	D
Good	3.0	73 – 77	B	Failure	0.0	50 – 52	D-
		70 – 72	B-			<50	F

## I. Course Policies

### 1. Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted after their due date, and will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will *not* receive requests for extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the zero grade will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

### 2. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is defined as stealing from the ideas or writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. This occurs when someone copies or closely paraphrases the intellectual work of someone else without giving proper recognition of the source of the material copied or paraphrased (e.g. in an endnote or text reference). Any assignment in which plagiarism can be identified beyond a reasonable doubt will receive a grade of zero, and potential failure in the course. For further details see the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook.

## J. Course Outline/Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Jan. 6	Orientation to the Course
Jan. 9	Lecture: Emergence/History of the Director
Jan. 13	Textual Analysis: Class Discussion READ: 1) <i>Page to Stage; An Approach to Script Analysis</i> (2004). Stanley Vincent Longman, Chapter 1, The Nature of Drama: What is a Play? p. 5-24. (reserve readings in the library) 2) <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (on reserve in the library)
Jan. 16	Collaboration and Core Action Class Discussion: READ: <i>The Director as Collaborator</i> , pp. 1 - 46
Jan. 20	Structure of Text Class Discussion: READ: <i>The Director as Collaborator</i> pp. 47 - 61
Jan. 23	Character Work Class Discussion: READ: <i>The Director as Collaborator</i> pp. 61 – 76 <b>Play choice for Directing assignment due</b>
Jan. 27	<b>Day of Prayer (classes cancelled)</b>
Jan. 30	Casting: Class discussion READ: <i>The Director at Work</i> . (1985), Chapter 10, Casting pp. 86 – 93. Video Clip and class discussions
Feb. 3	The Groundplan: Class Discussion READ: <i>Play Directing; Analysis, Communication, and Style</i> . (2005). Hodge, Francis, and Michael McLain, Chapter 9, Helping Actors Communicate through Groundplans pp. 69 - 80

- Feb. 6           **Student Groundplan Presentations**
- Feb. 10          Tempo, Movement, Gesture; Class Discussion  
READ: *The Director as Collaborator* pp. 76 - 100
- Feb. 13          The Dynamics of Movement  
**Book Review Due**
- Feb. 17          Composition and The Stage Picture
- Feb. 20          Meaning and Movement
- Feb. 24          Class Attendance of *Fly Fisher's Companion*, MTC
- Feb. 27          Class Discussion of *Fly Fisher's Companion*
- Mar. 2 – 6      Reading Days (classes cancelled)**
- Mar. 10          Running an Audition  
**Emily, Andrew, Marie**
- Mar. 13          Running an Audition:  
**Janelle, Kelly, Cody, Alexandra**
- Mar. 17          Running an Audition:  
**Steven, Tracy, Jeremy, Matthew**
- Mar. 20          Introducing your play:  
**Emily Mekash, Andrew Sevigny Janelle Thiessen,**
- Mar. 24          Introducing your play:  
**Alexandra Smith, Kelly Klassen, Cody Buhler**
- Mar. 27          Introducing your play:  
**Marie Raynard, Steven Sukkau, Tracy Doerksen**
- Mar. 31          Introducing your play:  
**Jeremy Bergen, Matthew Odynski**
- Apr. 3           Scene Presentations  
**Directors: Emily, Andrew, Janelle, Alexandra, Kelly**  
(EVENING: 6:30 – 9:00pm)

Apr. 7      Scene Presentations  
**Directors: Cody, Marie, Steven, Tracy, Jeremy, Matthew**  
(EVENING: 6:30 – 9:00pm)

**Personal Position Paper Due**

Apr. 10      **Good Friday (classes cancelled)**