

# DIRECTING 1



**THEA 3325 | CRN: 19157 | Fall, 2018**

**Monday/Wednesday, 9:00-10:20am, D178**

**Instructor: Greg Beam**

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**Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 12:00-2:00pm, location TBA, or by appointment**

***“Welcome to opening night as a director: two hours of powerlessness with your name on it.” - Daniel Kremer***

# COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the building blocks of an actor's technique, employing and building on the central principles laid out by Constantin Stanislavski: Relaxation, Concentration, Imagination, Circumstances, and Action. Attention will also be paid to developing the actor's imagination, interacting fluidly and responsively with a partner, and learning to deepen the actor's connection with written material in pursuit of a vivid and truthful performance.

The first half of the semester will be devoted to a series of exercises designed to prepare and strengthen the actor's basic skills, culminating in the performance of a monologue. The second half will focus on applying these skills to the interpretation and performance of dramatic material, culminating in the performance of a scene with a partner. Using material drawn from contemporary dramatic literature, the student will practice physical release, concentration, engagement with environment and objects, commitment to the circumstances of a scene and to a character's individual point-of-view, the value of obstacle, and the importance of strong dramatic action.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To learn the underlying concepts required for approaching a directing project.
- To understand the practical requirements of staging a scene.
- To develop better methods of communication with collaborators, especially actors.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To direct a successful two-person scene, focusing on character and communication.
- To direct a successful multi-person scene, focusing on staging and action.

## DECORUM

Please be mindful that this is an introductory-level directing course. You may not know your classmates or understand their personal boundaries and comfort zones. While I encourage you to challenge your actors creatively, this is not the place to push your peers physically or emotionally. That kind of work requires an investment of time and trust that goes beyond the scope of this course. Please refrain, and ask your actors to refrain, from making any physical contact that is violent or sexual in nature. In general, they should get permission before making any contact more intrusive than a handshake.

## MATERIALS

Textbook: Ball, William. *A Sense of Direction*; ISBN 0896760820

Contemporary Play (TBA).

You will also need to select a scene from a contemporary play of your choosing. The UTEP library has a sufficient selection. I will give you detailed instructions on what to look for, but I would encourage you to visit the library soon to get a sense what they have.

Any props you may need for scenes or monologues, please bring from home.

## COMMUNICATION

You must have an active UTEP email address and check it regularly. You should also have regular access to Blackboard. These will be my primary means of communicating with you outside of class. Please note that I will not respond to emails sent from personal email accounts. If you want to contact me, use your UTEP email address.

## DISABILITY STATEMENT

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at UTEP provides students with disabilities accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals. If you are dealing with a mental, physical, emotional, or sensory disability, you are encouraged to contact them for a confidential consultation. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected at all class sessions. Absences, as well as severe or consistent tardiness, will have a direct impact on your final grade. If you know you will need to be absent for a particular class, please inform me by email or in person as soon as possible. It's easier to make arrangements to make up anything you miss if advanced notice is given. But please be mindful that in-class assignments often cannot be made up (which is to say, if you don't show up when you have work due, you might get a big goose egg on that assignment). If you are running late to class, please send me an email as soon as you can safely do so. (Pull over if you're driving.)

## BREAKS

In accordance with Actors Equity Association rules, we will take either two five-minute breaks or one ten-minute break during each class session. This is the time to use the restroom,

check your phone, and chow down on those scrumptious snacks you've brought. When we are working, please remain in the room and fully attentive.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment and possible disciplinary action. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please check the UTEP Student Handbook for more information on academic dishonesty, and if you're in doubt about whether your use of a source is acceptable, don't hesitate to check with me.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of cell phones, tablets, and computers is forbidden, unless used for research or other class-related work under the direct supervision of the instructor. If you would like to use your phone or tablet to look something up, please ask me before doing so. If you are using your phone during class, I will ask you to put it away, and it will be awkward for everyone involved.

# ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

## QUIZZES AND RESPONSES (20%)

Throughout the semester, there will be quizzes and written responses for the assigned reading. These may be given in class or assigned to complete at home. Assume there will be a quiz or response for every reading assignment.

## LIVE PERFORMANCE RESPONSE: *Bless Me, Ultima* (10%)

You are required to attend the UTEP production of *Bless Me, Ultima* (Oct. 3\*, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 @ 7:30p.m.; Oct. 7 & 14 @ 2:00p.m.) and write a brief response. Details to follow.

\* \$10 tickets for the first performance

## SHORT SCENE (15%)

During the first half of the semester, each student will direct a short scene (< 5 minutes) with two characters.

You will use your classmates as actors, and the scenes will be presented on **Wednesday, October 4.**

## SHORT SCENE ANALYSIS AND BREAKDOWN (5%)

You will turn in a brief write-up detailing the elements of your first scene. Details to follow.

## FINAL SCENE (25%)

During the second half of the semester, each student will direct a moderate-length scene (~7-10 minutes) with at least three characters.

You may use your classmates as actors or solicit help from other students in the department. The scenes will be presented during the final-exam period, on **Wednesday, May 9, 4:00-6:45pm.** Time permitting, there will be a verbal critique to follow.

Please note: The difficulty of a scene increases greatly, almost exponentially, as more characters are added. While you are required to have at least three characters in your final scene, I would strongly advise you to limit the number to four or five.

## FINAL SCENE ANALYSIS AND BREAKDOWN (5%)

You will turn in a brief write-up detailing the elements of your final scene. Details to follow.

## FINAL SCENE REHEARSAL LOG (5%)

You will turn in a rehearsal log for your final scene. Details to follow.

## PERFORMANCE PARTICIPATION (5%)

This is not an acting class, but if another director asks you to participate in their scene, you are expected to do so and to commit fully. If you have concerns about your ability to perform effectively in the role they ask you to play, whether because of content or scheduling, feel free to discuss it with me.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (10%)

Presence and active participation in all class sessions is expected, including providing feedback to your colleagues' work.

| ASSIGNMENTS                         | POSSIBLE POINTS |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Quizzes and Responses:              | 20              |
| Live Performance Response:          | 10              |
| Short Scene:                        | 15              |
| Short Scene Analysis and Breakdown: | 5               |
| Final Scene:                        | 25              |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                       | 100             |

A = 90-100 points

B = 80-89 points

C = 70-79 points

D = 60-69 points

F = 0-59 points

## COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

| Class Meeting   | Exercises                                     | Assignments   | Reading  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Week 1: Introduction</b><br>Monday, Aug. 27<br>Wednesday, Aug. 29  | Casting & Prep                                |   | TBA  |
| <b>Week 2: Circumstances &amp; Communication</b><br>Monday, Sept. 2<br>Wednesday, Sept. 4   | Open scenes                                   |   | TBA  |
| <b>Week 3: Circumstances &amp; Communication, cont'd; Introducing Perspectives, Intentions, Actions, and Secrets</b><br>Monday, Sept. 10<br>Wednesday, Sept. 12 | Open scenes, cont'd                           |   | TBA  |
| <b>Week 4: Perspectives, Intentions, Actions, and Secrets, cont'd</b><br>Monday, Sept. 17<br>Wednesday, Sept. 19  | Open scenes, cont'd                           |   | TBA  |
| <b>Week 5: Introducing Objectives, Obstacles, Tactics, Stakes, and Expectations</b><br>Monday, Sept. 24<br>Wednesday, Sept. 26                                  | Mini Scene                                    | <b>Quiz on contemporary play</b>  | <b>Read contemporary play and submit scene preferences by Monday, Sept. 24</b> |
| <b>Week 6: Objectives, Obstacles, Tactics, Stakes, and Expectations, cont'd</b><br>Monday, Oct. 1<br>Wednesday, Oct. 3  | Mini Scene, cont'd; discuss contemporary play | <b>Short scene selected, cast, and cut (if necessary) by Monday, Oct. 1</b> | TBA  |
| <b>Week 7: Setting the Scene</b><br>Monday, Oct. 8<br>Wednesday, Oct. 10  | Mini Scene, cont'd                            | <b>First rehearsal for short scene conducted by Wednesday, Oct. 10</b>      | TBA  |

| <b>Class Meeting</b>   | <b>Exercises</b> | <b>Assignments</b>   | <b>Reading</b> |
|--|------------------|--|----------------|
| <b>Week 8: Rehearsal</b><br>Monday, Oct. 15<br>Wednesday, Oct. 17                              | Short Scene      | <b>Stage short scene by Wednesday, Oct. 17; review rubric for midterm</b>  | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Week 9: Performance</b><br>Monday, Oct. 22<br>Wednesday, Oct. 24                            | Short Scene      | <b>Run through short scenes with feedback on Monday, Oct. 22; performance of short scene (midterm) on Wednesday, Oct. 24</b> | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Week 10: Staging</b><br>Monday, Oct. 29<br>Wednesday, Oct. 31                               | Open Scenes      |  | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Week 11: Staging</b><br>Monday, Nov. 5<br>Wednesday, Nov. 7                                 | Open Scenes      | <b>Final scene selected and approved by Monday, Nov. 5</b>   | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Week 12: Staging</b><br>Monday, Nov. 12<br>Wednesday, Nov. 14                               | Group Scene      | <b>Final scene cast and cut (if necessary) by Monday, Nov. 12</b>  | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Week 13: Scene Work (character, text, staging)</b><br>Monday, Nov. 19<br>Wednesday, Nov. 21 | Group Scene      | <b>First rehearsal of final scene conducted by Monday, Nov. 19</b>   | <b>TBA</b>     |

| <b>Class Meeting</b>  | <b>Exercises</b> | <b>Assignments</b>                                     | <b>Reading</b> |
|---|------------------|--|----------------|
| <b>Week 14: Scene Work, cont'd</b><br><b>Monday, Nov. 26</b><br><b>Wednesday, Nov. 28</b> | Final Scene      | <b>Stage final scene by Monday, Nov. 26</b>            | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Week 15: Scene Work, cont'd</b><br><b>Monday, Dec. 3</b><br><b>Wednesday, Dec. 5</b>   | Final Scene      |  | <b>TBA</b>     |
| <b>Finals Week: Scene Performance</b><br><b>Final: Wednesday, Dec. 12, 4:00pm-6:45pm</b>  |                  | <b>PRESENTATION OF FINAL SCENES DURING EXAM PERIOD</b> |                |