



## Directing I THEA 3325

*"Welcome to opening night as a director:  
two hours of powerlessness with your name on it."*

-Daniel Kremer

Instructor: Jay Stratton  
Class: M, W 1:30-3:50  
Fox D071  
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Cell: 347-581-6468

Office Hours  
Fri 11:30-12:30  
Or anytime by appointment

Required Texts: A Sense of Direction by William Ball.

We will also be reading certain articles from American Theatre magazine available electronically through our library subscription.

We will also be reading at least one play that I will provide in PDF format.

### **Course Objectives**

After this course, you should:

1. Understand the underlying concepts to approach a directing project.
2. Have a greater ability to direct an effective scene.
3. Have stronger tools for communication with actors.

### **Grading**

#### Quizzes and Responses (20%)

Throughout the semester, there will be quizzes and written responses to the assigned reading. Assume there will be a quiz or response on every piece of reading. Quizzes and responses may be made up in the case of excused absences only.

#### Live Production Response: *Bless Me Ultima* (10%)

Each student is required to see this UTEP production and write a brief response paper. Details to follow.

#### Midterm Short Scene (15%)

During the first half of the semester, every student will direct a short (less than 6 minutes) two-character scene.

#### Midterm Scene Analysis (5%)

You will complete a brief analysis of your midterm scene. Details to follow.

#### Final Full Scene (20%)

During the second half of the semester, every student will direct a moderate length (6-10 minutes) scene with 3 or more characters.

### Final Scene Analysis (5%)

You will complete a brief analysis and breakdown of your final scene.  
Details to follow.

### Observational Log (10%)

You will spend much of this semester's class time observing other students doing directing work. You will NOT be required to be present at every in-class rehearsal, however, you will create an observational log to document your thoughts and constructive feedback for the scene rehearsals which you DO attend.  
Details to follow.

### Performance Participation (5%)

This is not an acting class, however, if another director asks you to participate in one of their scenes, you are expected to agree and commit fully. If you are not asked to be in any scenes, this grade percentage will be folded into participation.

### Participation (10% of grade)

You will be graded on your focus, willing participation, supportive attitude, and individual progress in daily class work. Respect and enthusiasm for the lessons and the work of your fellow theatre artists is a crucial part of this class work.

### **Grading Scale**

You will be assigned a letter grade on each of the above assignments. (A=4.0, B=3.0 etc.)  
Your final class grade is based on a weighted average of these grades (before any modification for attendance) according to the following scale.

A	=	3.50+
B	=	2.50 - 3.49
C	=	1.50 - 2.49
D	=	0.50 - 1.49
F	=	Less than .50

### Extra Credit

You may earn extra credit by doing additional live production responses.  
Every student is required to write a production response for *Bless Me Ultima*. However, you can earn extra credit by seeing live performances and writing responses for many other productions in and around El Paso. To earn extra credit, your response must be at least 750 words and must touch on what you as a director learned from watching the production. In other words, "I liked it" doesn't cut it. Value of an extra credit response is up to me.  
Details on live production responses to follow.

*Syllabus may change with appropriate notice*



## Directing I Class Policies

**Communication:** I rely heavily on email for communication. You **MUST** check your preferred email daily. You should also check Blackboard daily as some of our reading selections will be stored there.

There are two ways to submit written work: my favorite way to receive written assignments is a **WORD DOCUMENT** attached to an email. I also happily accept hard copies of written work. No other channel but these two is acceptable unless you make prior arrangement with me.

**Attendance:** The best way to trash your grade is with bad attendance. In the professional world, actors always show up and they are always on time. Nothing less is acceptable. Class starts on time; one minute after is late.

**Please note, if you set your bag down and then go to the restroom and are not present for the start of class, you are late.**

In this class, *absent and late are the same thing*. **You may be absent or late 3 times**, no questions asked. On your fourth attendance issue, your final grade will be reduced one letter grade. On your sixth attendance issue, your final grade will be reduced two letter grades. If you have eight or more attendance issues, you cannot receive a passing grade in the course.

At my discretion, an absence may be excused for legitimate medical reasons, professional obligations, or family emergency. The request for an excused absence must be asked for in writing. I may also ask for some kind of proof of the circumstances. If you have an absence, you are still responsible for missed work. Absences do not change the due dates of assignments.

**Breaks:** Because this class is long, we will take two 5-minute breaks during every class. This is the time to go to the restroom, check phone, eat snacks, etc. If you must leave class at any other time, it should be a legitimate emergency.

**Phones and Electronics:** Phones and electronics in class are a pet peeve of mine. All phones and electronics should be turned off for the duration of class. If you take out a phone, tablet, or other electronic device without permission during class, you may be asked to leave and the day will count as absence. If a phone rings during class, you may be asked to leave and the day will count as absence. Also, I will freak out. Exception, if you use a laptop or tablet to take notes or reference a script, that is cool. However, a phone is **NOT** acceptable for that purpose.

**Touching:** The performance work in this course may involve touching; however, safety is our first priority. ‘Safety’ in this instance refers to both physical safety and respect for personal boundaries. If you have trouble with being touched or touching someone else, tell me immediately. Absolutely no one should be touching anyone in an inappropriate manner. If you feel unsafe for any reason, tell me immediately, and we will adjust the scene or exercise accordingly.

**Seeing Shows:** In addition to *Bless Me Ultima*, you must see all productions produced by the Department of Theatre and Dance. This includes both the Fall Dance Concert and *A Christmas Carol, En La Frontera*.

Departmental Disclaimer: The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual's rights to choose what shows you want to see, I expect all our discussions—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

**Late Work:** Written work is due by the *beginning of class* the scheduled calendar day. Written work turned in after the due date will be penalized 1 full letter grade. Written work turned in more than one week late will be penalized 2 full letter grades.

**Academic Dishonesty:** University Policy will be strictly adhered to and absolutely no academic impropriety will be tolerated. All transgressions of university policy including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, the unauthorized exchange of information for written assignments or tests, theft via the computer or infringement of the rights of other to academic freedom (i.e. disrupting class, disrespectful comments towards classmates or instructor) will result in a failing grade for this course as well as disciplinary procedures as adopted by the university and described in the current student handbook.

**Disabled Student Statement:** In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call [915-747-5148](tel:915-747-5148) for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you may have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and the Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso.

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