

**DIRECTING I
THEA 3304
T/TH 12:00-1:20
Room D178, STUDIO THEATRE
FALL 2019**

Professor: Kim McKean
Email: kamckean@utep.edu

Office: Worrell 114
Office Hours: T/TH 1:30-2:30pm
(or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to be an introduction to the art and craft of directing for the theatre. We will do this through hands-on workshops, readings, discussions, working with actors, and analyzing performances. In the first half of the semester, we will cover fundamental concepts to orient the director's approach to the material, move through aspects of effective communication and collaboration, and practice methods for facilitating inspired creative work from actors. The second half of the course will focus on practical aspects of stagecraft, the development of dynamic blocking, and the rehearsal process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To direct a successful two-person scene or short play no longer than 10-minutes, focusing on character and communication with actors.
- To present a director's concept and vision for your chosen scene or play.
- To apply effective use of script analysis techniques for your chosen scene/play.
- To communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, about your own work and the work of peers.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To articulate the practical requirements of staging a scene.
- To develop better methods of communication with collaborators, especially actors.
- To synthesize conceptual, aesthetic and intellectual elements resulting in the directing of a short scene.
- To demonstrate effective techniques of theatre direction and dramaturgy using interpretation, dynamic staging, conceptual discussion and practice.

REQUIRED TEXTS

You must find a 7-10 minute scene or play of your choosing that you will direct in class. **This play or scene must only have two characters.** Once this scene is chosen, you must bring a hard copy of this scene to class at all times. Electronic copies are not allowed. Recommended play/scene books for you are below.

- "Scenes for Latinx Actors: Voices of the New American Theatre," Edited by Micha Espinosa & Cynthia De Cure , Smith & Krause Publishing
- "Funny, Strange, Provocative: Seven Plays from Clubbed Thumb," Playscripts INC.
- Shorter, Faster, Funnier: Comic Plays and Monologues: Eric Lane and Nina Shengold
- Any volume from the Humana Festival, The complete plays collections

Recommended Texts

- *A Director Prepares; Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* by Anne Bogart.
- *Directing for the Stage* by Terry John Converse
- *The Director's Vision: Play Directing from Analysis to Production* by Louis E. Catron.
- *Notes on Directing* by Frank Hauser & Russell Reich.
- *Theatre Games for Rehearsal; a director's handbook* by Viola Spolin.
- *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* by Keith Johnstone

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Complete assigned reading on time. Take notes and be prepared to discuss the text.
- Attend performances of *Real Women Have Curves* and 2 other shows from the list provided. ****YOU MUST SIGN IN AFTER THE SHOW OR YOU WILL NOT BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR ATTENDANCE****
- Write a 2-page observational paper relating to course concepts on *Real Women Have Curves*
- Direct one 7-10 minute scene or short play that demonstrates a thorough application of Learning Goals.
- Complete quizzes on reading.
- Turn in all homework assignments on Blackboard.
- Communicate with actors to make sure they will be present in class on the day you are assigned to work.
- Come to class **ON TIME** and ready to work. **Work with positivity and respect.**
- Meet scheduled deadlines and turn in assigned work on time. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Be prepared to participate in all classroom discussions and exercises.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due to the nature of this course, attendance at every session is mandatory. You will be allowed **TWO** "unexcused" absences during the semester. **Each absence after TWO lowers your overall grade a whole letter grade. For example, a 'B' becomes a 'C.'** **Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.** If there is an emergency or illness, I will review options for making up the work, but you must document the reason for the absences prior to the review. **SAVE YOUR ABSENCES FOR WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT.** If you miss more than 5 classes will automatically fail the class.

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit is available for attending and completing a 1-page reflection for an additional show from the list provided. Completing extra credit will take away 1 absence or give you an extra 5 points toward your cumulative grade.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All paperwork must be typed, double spaced, and printed.

1. UTEP Show Attendance.....	10%
2. UTEP Show Observational Paper.....	10%
3. Final Reflective Paper.....	10%
4. Reading Quizzes	20%
5. Homework.....	25%
6. Final Scene	25%

EVALUATION CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

1. UTEP SHOW ATTENDANCE

You must see 3 productions produced by the Department of Theatre and Dance this fall from the list provided. *Real Women Have Curves* is required and the other 2 shows are “Students’ Choice.” There are ushering opportunities for every show (ushers see the show for free) and specific discounted nights for every production. You are required to sign-in to the show to receive credit. If you are in the show or working *Real Women Have Curves*, you must choose 3 shows from the “Students Choice” list and write about one of them. If this is the case, please email me in advance.

A NOTE ON SUBJECT MATTER FOR REQUIRED SHOWS

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.

2. UTEP Show Observational Paper

A written critical response that observes the direction of *Real Women Have Curves* is required. Responses should relate to course concepts and should not be a summary of the play. Papers are due via Blackboard on Friday, 10/26. No late work will be accepted unless pre-determined with me.

3. FINAL REFLECTIVE PAPER

You will be asked to respond in writing to the process of directing your final scene (from first read to final presentation), commenting on each phase of the scene’s development. Due in Blackboard on 12/14 by 5PM.

4. READING QUIZZES

Throughout the semester, there will be 3 quizzes on blackboard from the assigned reading. These are due on: 9/13, 10/4, and 11/8.

5. HOMEWORK

Throughout the course of the semester there will be several homework assignments due on Blackboard relating to course concepts. Check the syllabus regularly to make sure you are staying on top of all due dates.

6. FINAL SCENE

During the course of the semester, each student will direct short 7-10 minute play or scene. You may use your classmates as actors or solicit help from other students in the department. If you use actors outside of class, it is your responsibility to ensure they will be available for our class time, for your assigned rehearsal times. **IF AN ACTOR IN YOUR SCENE MISSES A CLASS PERIOD OF REHEARSAL WHEN YOU ARE SCHEDULED TO WORK, IT IS THE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO make up that work, and you may not receive credit for the rehearsal missed.** The final presentations of scenes will be presented during the final-exam period, on Tuesday, December 10th from 1:00-3:45PM.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No electronic devices allowed in class unless permission is given beforehand. Students using electronic devices in class will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

SUBJECT MATTER

The scripts and scenes studied in this course deal with mature subject matters. Consequently, some of the discussion in class will require discussion of adult subject matter and language. If you have concerns, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. All classroom discussions must be held in a respectful and professional matter.

PARTICIPATION

Active participation is vital to your growth as artists and to your success in this class. You will be expected to come to class on-time and fully prepared, actively engage in class discussions, and give your all to class exercises. Share your voice! We only get better by asking questions and taking risks. **ALSO:** 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.

RESPECT

The work in this class may elicit a strong emotional response. In order for this work to be done respectfully, it is crucial that the classroom be a **SAFE PLACE**. Absolutely no bullying, gossiping, or judgement will be tolerated. Any student who is not contributing to a safe, creative, work environment will be asked to leave class and receive an absence for that class period. *Any student who engages in conduct that is harassment of any University community member, including sexual harassment as defined in Section VI. in the UTEP Handbook may be subject to discipline.*

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please visit <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/> for more information.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

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 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. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

Grading Scale

A = 90%-100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 0% - 59%

“**A**”—indicates exceedingly high quality work. Masters all assigned work, completes work on time, shows originality and initiative, does more than required, and makes quality contributions in class.

“**B**”—indicates good progress, above the average, masters portions of the work, is alert and shows an interest in the work, completes work on time, and offers good discussion points in class.

“**C**”—indicates a quality of work acceptable at this level. Satisfactorily completes most assigned work under normal conditions and direction, shows interest in work, and completes work on time.

“**D**”—indicates that although most assignments may be completed there is a need for greater effort to meet the expected level of work for this course, student is hesitant to engage in the work or at times shows little interest, and seldom responds in class.

“**F**”—indicates failure to produce an accepted quality of work for this course.

Tentative Class Schedule:

Subject to change

WEEK 1—Intro to Directing

T 8/27 Syllabus Review, Course Orientation + Introductions. Silent Scenes beginning

HOMEWORK:

- Begin to find a scene or 10-min MAX play/scene that speaks to you from our sourced text (or otherwise if approved by instructor) by 9/6.
- Read “The Director’s Function and Responsibilities” Article in Blackboard for Thursday, 8/29

TR 8/29 The Director’s Challenge—Creating, managing and executing a vision. Creating a collective do’s and don’ts towards a healthy creative environment. Silent Scenes in-class work.

WEEK 2—Phase 1: Communication

T 9/3 Initial exploration & inspiration through open scenes. How do you communicate your ideas?

HOMEWORK:

- Once you have found selected your scene or play, upload to Blackboard to Kim by for approval. **DUE by 9:00PM on 9/6.**
- Read “Relation to Actors” article on Blackboard for Thursday, 9/5

TR 9/5 Continue exploration communication and inspiration through open scenes.

WEEK 3 Phase I: Communication—*The People* (Actors & Audience.)

T 9/10 Using Point of View and Secrets for talking to actors and stronger audience connection.

HOMEWORK:

- Begin to collect images, stories, songs, props, etc. that you can bring to your first “production meeting” for your 10-minute play. This can be done via a Pinterest page or PowerPoint presentation. **Due on Tuesday 9/24**

TR 9/12 Using Point of View and Secrets for talking to actors and stronger audience connection.

HOMEWORK:

- Blackboard Quiz 1 on “Director’s Function and Responsibilities” and “Relation to Actors” due by FRIDAY 9/13 at 9PM

WEEK 4—Phase 2: Entering the World of the Play

T 9/17 Finish Open Scene Work

TR 9/19 Pre-production: World of the Play

HOMEWORK: Image board link due on Blackboard by **Tuesday, 9/24 at 9PM**

Prep your concept “hotseat” director presentation for Tuesday. What is the script about in three sentences? What is this production? What is your concept? Pick 3 highlights from your “Image Board” and share with your “design team” for Thursday

Blackboard Quiz 1 on “Director’s Function and Responsibilities” and “Relation to Actors” due by FRIDAY 9/20 at 9PM

Actors cast in your scene by Tuesday, 9/24

WEEK 5— Phase 2: Pre-production Script and Director Breakdown

T 9/24 Design Concept 4 min. presentation, ALL PRESENT

HOMEWORK:

- Script/Director Breakdown due on Blackboard by Tuesday, 10/1 at 9PM

TR 9/26 Script/Director Breakdown/Table Read
Table Read Group Workshop

HOMEWORK:

- Table Read Response due on Blackboard by Monday 9/30 at 9PM
- Reminder, Script/Director Breakdown due on Blackboard by 10/1 at 9PM

WEEK 6- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 10/1 Blocking and Composition Workshop

HOMEWORK:

Have Read “The Rehearsal Process,” “Planning the Rehearsal Schedule” and “Rehearsing the Production” for Thursday 10/3

TR 10/3 In-Class Rehearsals *Blocking* Groups 1-4

HOMEWORK:

Blackboard Quiz 2 on “Rehearsal” articles Blackboard due by 9PM Friday, 10/4

WEEK 7- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 10/8 In-Class Rehearsals *Blocking* Groups 5-8

TR 10/10 In-Class Rehearsals *Blocking* Groups 9-12

WEEK 8- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 10/15 In-Class Rehearsals *Blocking* Groups 13-16

HOMEWORK:

Read “Objectives” article for Thursday, 10/17

TR 10/17 Piecing Together and Actor Choices Workshop

WEEK 9- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 10/22 In-Class Rehearsals *Piecing Together and Actor Choices* Groups 1-4

TR 10/25 In-Class Rehearsals *Piecing Together and Actor Choices* Groups 5-8

HOMEWORK:

RWHC RESPONSE DUE IN BLACKBOARD by 9PM on Friday 10/26

WEEK 10- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 10/29 In-Class Rehearsals *Piecing Together and Actor Choices* Groups 9-12

TR 10/31 In-Class Rehearsals *Piecing Together and Actor Choices* Groups 13-16

HOMEWORK:

Read “Character” article for Tuesday, 11/5

WEEK 11- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 11/5 *Looking at the Details* Workshop

TR 11/7 In-Class Rehearsals “*On-Details*” Group 1-4

HOMEWORK:

Character and Objectives Reading Quiz DUE in Blackboard by 9PM Friday, 11/8

WEEK 12- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 11/12 In-Class Rehearsals “*On-Details*” Groups 5-8

TR 11/15 In-Class Rehearsals “*On-Details*” Groups 9-12

WEEK 13- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 11/19 In-Class Rehearsals “*On-Details*” Groups 13-16

TR 11/21 “Trouble Shooting” Group Workshop

HOMEWORK:

- GOALS for Final Rehearsal Session due **on Blackboard by Friday, 11/22 at 9PM**

WEEK 14- Phase III: Rehearsals Phase

T 11/26 Final Rehearsal and Giving Notes Groups 1-5 in class

TR 11/28 NO CLASS, HAPPY THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15- Phase III: Rehearsals & Production Phase

T 12/3 Final Rehearsal and Giving Notes Groups 6-11 in class

TR 12/5 Final Rehearsal and Giving Notes Groups 12-16 in class

FINAL EXAM:

10 min. PLAY/SCENE FINAL PRESENTATION

Tuesday, December 10th 1:00 pm – 3:45 pm

FINAL REFLECTION PAPER DUE:

Saturday, December 14th at 5PM