



**NORTHERN ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY**
College of Arts & Letters

Department of Theatre

TH 352 Directing 1; 3 Units
Spring 2018- 8202
Mode of Instruction: Face to Face
TTH 2:20-3:35, PAC Room 151
Professor: Christina Gutierrez-Dennehy
Christina.Dennehy@nau.edu
Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:30
Office: PAC 123A

There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and there is only one of you in all time. This expression is unique, and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium; and be lost. The world will not have it.

Martha Graham

Course Prerequisites: TH 130 (Script Analysis) with a grade of “C” or better; admission to the Theatre Major

Course Purpose: This course is an introduction to the practice of directing. It is an examination of the ways in which we use bodies, language, and image to sculpt stories on stage. Throughout the semester, we will work to define the role of the director in relation to the text, the actors, and the audience. We will combine practical exercises with theoretical readings in order to come to a holistic understanding of the process and importance of direction. You will learn to become active watchers/listeners, and constructive critics of each other’s efforts. The semester will culminate in a public showing of your work.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Value and apply an understanding of and experience with Theatre as a collaborative art to the scholarship and practice of Theatre.
 - Discuss events, actions, objectives, and obstacles with actors
- Apply knowledge of theory to practical work in Theatre.
 - Analyze a script by breaking it into actions
 - Constructively critique theatrical work
- Effectively communicate the theory and practice of Theatre in literary, verbal, and non-verbal modes
 - Create production approaches grounded in text
- Apply effective problem solving through creative and critical thinking.
 - Practice effective staging and composition techniques
- Practice an effective system of preparation and working habits.
 - Use a mixture of techniques and approaches in the rehearsal room
 - Analyze the creative processes through the creation of a Director’s Notebook

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Methods of Assessments (see descriptions below):

- Season selection pitch
- Production concept paper
- Director's notebook
- Reviews of department productions
- Journal
- Final scene
- In-class exercise participation
- Attendance (see policy in "policies" section)

See Course Schedule for due dates of all assessments/assignments.

Season Selection Pitches

The culmination of your work in this class will be a 10 minute scene for a play selected by the entire class. In order to determine the play we will work from, you will need to pitch a text of your choosing to the class. As you choose your play, consider production and casting requirements, along with the reasons you want to tell the story of your piece, and how you feel this story is timely and worth telling. Your pitches will be 2-3 mins long. We will go over the requirements and format in class.

Production Concept Paper

In advance of the presentation of your chosen final scene, you will submit a 3-4 page paper detailing your approach to the text, including consideration of theme, action, setting (historical, contextual, etc.), design, and casting. Your paper will also include an explanation of your choice of scene from our play and the ways in which your scene reflects your understanding of the play as a whole. You will turn in a rough draft of your paper to me in class on February 27. Your final paper will be due with your director's notebook on the day you present your final scene to the class. I highly encourage you to stop by my office hours to discuss your work.

Director's Notebook

On the day you present your scene, you will turn in a complete Director's Notebook. Notebooks should include:

- The final copy of your production concept paper
- Research images/songs/texts
- A ground plan and basic design notes
- A scored copy of your script, including marks for beats, actions, etc. All blocking notes
- Rehearsal schedules

Specific instructions for all of these elements will be provided in class.

Play Reviews

You will attend both main stage NAU productions and write 2-3 page reviews based on your understanding of production concepts and directing thus far. Further instructions will be provided well before the first deadline.

Final Scene

On the day you are assigned, you will present your chosen scene to the class. We will then discuss scenes as a group. We will hold open auditions for these scenes, although you are also welcome to cast actors you know from the department outside of formal auditions. You will log a minimum of 12 hours of rehearsal for this scene. One of these rehearsals may take place on the class days for which we've scheduled in-class rehearsals. I will work with you to schedule one of your rehearsals (in or outside of class) that I will visit and on which I will provide you feedback. Actors should have all lines memorized. Plan to use the rehearsal furniture we have available in class. Costumes are not necessary, but do use a few pieces if you need them to illustrate your concept.

Journal

Directing can be as personal an experience as it is a collaborative endeavor. Many professional directors carry notebooks with them to jot down ideas, flashes of inspiration, questions, and connections they make to the productions they are directing. You will practice this kind of un-ordered writing, as well as reflect on your own growth and development as a director. Plan to write in your journals at least 2-3 times a week, but do of course make as many entries as you find necessary/helpful to your process. Required entries include:

- One introductory entry that lists your thoughts/feelings about directing before we've really begun work. What are you excited about? What are you scared of?
- Reflections on each piece of assigned reading. What is your understanding of the arguments presented? Do you agree? Why or why not? How do you see these concepts working (or not) in your practice?
- 2-3 reflections on in-class exercises. How are they useful to your practice (or not)?
- 3-5 (or more!) pieces of inspiration for your scene/production concept. These can be in the form of images, song lyrics, text, or whatever it is you find. For each, include a sentence or two about how it fits into your thinking about your scene
- 2-3 direct engagements with our chosen play as a whole. What questions do you have? What research have you done? What are you excited about? What are you scared of?
- Reflections on each rehearsal you have with your cast. What do you feel is working? What are you struggling with?
- One final entry that looks back on your first entry and tracks your journey as a beginning director. Again ask yourself what you're excited about, and, of course, what you're scared of.

Participation

Directing an inherently collaborative and participatory art. No one (effectively) directs a play alone in her apartment. I expect you to come to class each day prepared to participate in discussions and classroom activities. As each director is different, we will learn from each other as much as we will learn from the material we read and the work we do. If this is intimidating to you, please come talk to me in office hours, as your participation is an essential part of your course grade.

Grading System

Season selection pitch	100 points
Production Concept Paper	100 points
Director's Notebook	150 points
2 Play reviews (100 points each)	200 points
Final Scene	150 points
Journal	100 points
Participation	100 points
Attendance	100 points
TOTAL	1000 points

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

A = 900-1000 points

B = 800-899 points

C = 700-799 points

D = 600-699 points

F = 599 points and below

Textbooks and Required Materials

Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards*. Illinois University Press, 1983

Bogart, Anne. *A Director Prepares*. Routledge, 2001

Dean, Alexander and Lawrence Carra. *Fundamentals of Play Directing* (5th Edition). Waveland Press, 2009.

Play text of class' chosen play (TBA)

Course Policies

Attendance

Because so much of our work will be practical, you are expected to be here every day, ready to participate. Since I understand that things like illnesses, emergencies, missed busses, and broken alarm clocks happen, you are allowed three (3) "sick days" or absences with no effect to your total grade. After three absences, however, each additional absence will have an effect on your

grade. In addition, missing class will often mean that you miss in-class workshops and exercises (and therefore participation points) which cannot be made up. Out of fairness to everyone in class, I am unlikely to make exceptions to this policy in any but the most dire circumstances. If you arrive after 2:40 p.m., you will be marked tardy. Three tardies will affect your grade as much as a single absence. I also reserve the right to mark you tardy if you leave early or sleep through class.

Reading

Readings are due to be completed on the first day on which they are listed on your syllabus. You should bring your book each day there are readings due so that you will be able to engage directly with the text(s) in class discussion. As you read, take critical notes and ask questions of both yourself and the text. Many of the readings, particularly the more theoretical readings, are meant to challenge you. You do not have to agree with or like the readings, but you are required to attempt to understand and critically engage with them.

Guidelines for Written Work

Unless otherwise noted, all work is due at the beginning of class on the date listed on this syllabus. No electronic submissions will be accepted. All written work should be double spaced and typed in Times New Roman font, size 12. Margins should be between 1" and 1.25". Late work will receive one full letter grade off for every day (*not every class day*) that it is late.

FURTHER COURSE POLICIES

On E-mail: I will rely on e-mail to communicate with you, and to alert you when pertinent information is posted on Blackboard. Plan to check your e-mail at least three times weekly for updates on assignments and other class-related matters.

On classroom behavior: In order to foster a supportive learning environment for everyone, I'm including a list of basic classroom guidelines. These shouldn't be necessary in a college classroom, and I do expect that we will enjoy a collaborative, supportive learning environment together. These are simply meant to ensure that everyone stays engaged and courteous to all in the room:

- No late arrivals or early departures (see attendance policy)
- No mp3 player or cell phone use (no texting, no answering, etc.), or handheld video games. No sidebar conversations. If you have something to contribute to discussion, please share it with everyone.
- If you are using a laptop for notes, please remain engaged with the class (no e-mail, games, instant messaging, Facebook, etc).
- Rude, disparaging comments to or about others in the room will not be tolerated. This is meant to be a safe place of exploration, and some of you may have different views on or experiences with the topics and exercises we cover in class. I welcome engaged debate and an exploration of alternative points of view. Comments which are meant to attack or humiliate your fellow students will cause you to be asked to leave class, thereby forfeiting participation points for the day.

On grades: All grades will be posted on Blackboard in a timely manner, so you can easily keep track of your progress. To get to Blackboard, go to [http:// bblearn.nau.edu/](http://bblearn.nau.edu/). Log in using your LOUIE ID and locate the class by its title.

On academic dishonesty: I take academic honesty very seriously, and infractions will not be tolerated. As such, any instances of academic dishonesty may result in course failure and involvement of appropriate university officials. I will be more than happy to meet with you in office hours to help with specific questions and concerns. As such, however, I am extremely unlikely to accept the ignorance of policy or procedure as an excuse for plagiarized work. For more details, see NAU's list of sanctions found online in the Student Handbook.

On academic accommodations: If you have a documented disability, you can arrange for accommodations by contacting the office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at 928-523-8773 (voice) or 928-523-6906 (TTY). In order for your individual needs to be met, you are required to provide DSS with disability related documentation and are encouraged to provide it at least eight weeks prior to the time you wish to receive accommodations. You must register with DSS each semester you are enrolled at NAU and wish to use accommodations. Faculty members are not authorized to provide a student with disability related accommodations without prior approval from DSS. Students who have registered with DSS are encouraged to notify their instructors a minimum of two weeks in advance to ensure accommodations. Otherwise, the provision of accommodations may be delayed.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENTS

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

NAU's Safe Working and Learning Environment Policy prohibits sexual harassment and assault, and discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, or veteran status by anyone at this university. Retaliation of any kind as a result of making a complaint under the policy or participating in an investigation is also prohibited. The Director of the Equity and Access Office (EAO) serves as the university's compliance officer for affirmative action, civil rights, and Title IX, and is the ADA/504 Coordinator. EAO also assists with religious accommodations. You may obtain a copy of this policy from the college dean's office or from NAU's Equity and Access Office website nau.edu/diversity/. If you have questions or concerns about this policy, it is important that you contact the departmental chair, dean's office, the Office of Student Life (928-523-5181), or NAU's Equity and Access Office (928) 523-3312 (voice), (928) 523-9977 (fax), (928) 523-1006 (TTD) or equityandaccess@nau.edu.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability, you can arrange for accommodations by contacting Disability Resources (DR) at 523-8773 (voice) or 523-6906 (TTY), dr@nau.edu (e-mail) or 928-523-8747 (fax). Students needing academic accommodations are required to register with DR and provide required disability related documentation. Although you may request an accommodation at any time, in order for DR to best meet your individual needs, you are urged to

register and submit necessary documentation (www.nau.edu/dr) 8 weeks prior to the time you wish to receive accommodations. DR is strongly committed to the needs of student with disabilities and the promotion of Universal Design. Concerns or questions related to the accessibility of programs and facilities at NAU may be brought to the attention of DR or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (523-3312).

ACADEMIC CONTACT HOUR POLICY

Based on the Arizona Board of Regents Academic Contact Hour Policy (ABOR Handbook, 2-224), for every unit of credit, a student should expect, on average, to do a minimum of three hours of work per week, including but not limited to class time, preparation, homework, studying.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity is expected of every member of the NAU community in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded in honesty with respect to all intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. An NAU student's submission of work is an implicit declaration that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic contribution truthfully reported at all times. In addition, NAU students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers. Individual students and faculty members are responsible for identifying potential violations of the university's academic integrity policy. Instances of potential violations are adjudicated using the process found in the university Academic Integrity Policy.

SENSITIVE COURSE MATERIALS

University education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it necessarily involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In the course of college studies, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with faculty.

CLASSROOM DISRUPTION POLICY

Membership in the academic community places a special obligation on all participants to preserve an atmosphere conducive to a safe and positive learning environment. Part of that obligation implies the responsibility of each member of the NAU community to maintain an environment in which the behavior of any individual is not disruptive. Instructors have the authority and the responsibility to manage their classes in accordance with University regulations. Instructors have the right and obligation to confront disruptive behavior thereby promoting and enforcing standards of behavior necessary for maintaining an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. Instructors are responsible for establishing, communicating, and enforcing reasonable expectations and rules of classroom behavior. These expectations are to

be communicated to students in the syllabus and in class discussions and activities at the outset of the course. Each student is responsible for behaving in a manner that supports a positive learning environment and that does not interrupt nor disrupt the delivery of education by instructors or receipt of education by students, within or outside a class. The complete classroom disruption policy is in Appendices of NAU's Student Handbook.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to change with notice)

WEEK 1

- Tues (Jan 16) Introduction to Directing/Why do we tell stories?
- Thurs (Jan 18) No class—brainstorm the kinds of stories you want to tell.

UNIT 1: The Script

WEEK 2

- Tues (Jan 23) Introduction to script analysis—work with provided scenes
Reading: *Backwards and Forwards* Part 1
- Thurs (Jan 25) Script analysis—the components of a play—work with provided scenes
Season selection pitches—part 2
Reading: *Fundamentals of Play Directing* Chapter 3

WEEK 3

- Tues (Jan 30) The production concept
Season selection pitches—part 3
Reading: *Fundamentals of Play Directing* Chapter 13
- Thurs (Feb 1) Season selection pitches—discussion and vote
Discussion: Memory and Violence
Reading: *A Director Prepares* pp. 21-60

UNIT 2: The Stage

WEEK 4

Tues (Feb 6) Introduction to staging
Reading: *Fundamentals of Play Directing* Chapter 5

Wed (Feb 7) **Due:** Email your 15-35 line poem to me by 5 p.m.

Thurs (Feb 8) Composition and stage pictures—work with poems
Reading: *Fundamentals of Play Directing* Chapter 6

WEEK 5

Tues (Feb 13) Staging—A Designer’s Perspective—work with Jen Peterson

Thurs (Feb 15) Christina at conference, work with design and poem assignment

WEEK 6

Tues (Feb 20) Blocking and movement—work with poems
Reading: *Fundamentals of Play Directing* Chapter 8

Thurs (Feb 22) Staging and blocking exercises

WEEK 7

Tues (Feb 27) Staging and blocking exercises
Due: First draft of Production Concept papers (including choice of final scene)

Thurs (March 1) Discussion: Eroticism and Terror
Reading: *A Director Prepares* pp. 61-90

UNIT 3: The Process

WEEK 8

Tues (March 6) Introduction to active analysis
Reading: Active Analysis handout (pdf on BBLearn)
Due: *Mousetrap* review

Thurs (March 8) Active analysis: in-class practice

WEEK 9

Tues (March 13) Introduction to the Viewpoints
Reading: Bogart, “Viewpoints” (pdf on BBLearn)

Thurs (March 15) Practice with Viewpoints

WEEK 10

Tues (March 20) Spring Break

Thurs (March 22) Spring Break

WEEK 11

Tues (March 27) Introduction to Composition

Reading: Bogart, "Composition" (pdf on BBLearn)

Thurs (March 29) Composition practice

WEEK 12

Tues (April 3) Discussion: alternative rehearsal techniques and working with actors

Reading: *Fundamentals of Play Directing*, Chapter 11

Thurs (April 5) Discussion: Stereotype and Embarrassment

Reading: *A Director Prepares* p. 91-136

WEEK 13

Tues (April 10) In-class scene rehearsals

Thurs (April 12) In-class scene rehearsals

WEEK 14

Tues (April 17) Final scenes

Due: *Director's Notebooks*

Thurs (April 19) Final scenes

Due: *Director's Notebooks*

WEEK 15

Tues (April 24) Final scenes

Due: *Director's Notebooks*

Thurs (April 26) Final scenes

Due: *Director's Notebooks*

WEEK 16

Tues (May 1) Final scenes

Due: *Director's Notebooks*

Due: *Tartuffe* review

Thurs (May 3) Course wrap-up