

Directing I

Fall 2018

Instructor - Doug Finlayson

Class: T, Th 1-2:20

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Course Syllabus

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will:

- Be prepared to answer pertinent questions about the world of the play and the human condition of the characters in the play;
- Demonstrate through work on the play *LYDIA* that they can;
 - Analyze a script for Given Circumstances, Character and Meaning;
 - Break a play down into structural units;
 - Create an approach to communicating with actors, technicians and designers;
- Effectively research the world of the play;
- Demonstrate the skills of visual storytelling;
- Engage in an oral discussion of all work in the class, including *The Empty Space*, by Peter Brook;
- Demonstrate ensemble-building skills through group projects.

TEXTS

Directing Handout

The Empty Space

By Peter Brook

LYDIA

By Octavio Solis

REQUIREMENTS:

1. SUBMIT 2 to 3 PAGE FIRST DRAFT OF ANALYSIS Grade – 10%
2. OFFICE APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS FINAL GROUND PLAN Grade – 5%
3. PRE-PRODUCTION WORK - *LYDIA* (See attached sheet)
 - FINAL ANALYSIS (Typed) Grade – 15%
 - DRAMATIC ACTION (Units, Titles, Worksheet) Grade – 10%
 - PROMPT BOOK Grade – 5%
 - HIGHLIGHTED** SHARED RESEARCH Grade – 5%
4. SCENE - *LYDIA* **NOTE: Credit for scene awarded with complete analysis.**
 - 8-10 minutes maximum
 - 2 hours of rehearsal minimum Grade - 10%
5. INSTRUCTOR'S VISIT TO OUTSIDE REHEARSAL (Before Dec. 6) Grade – 5%
6. LIBRARY PROJECT COLLABORATION Grade - 5%
 - Library research project for *LYDIA*
7. STAGING EXERCISE - With a partner Grade - 5%
 - With a partner choose a one page scene from Realism (Not *LYDIA*) with 3-5 characters.
8. READING/DISCUSSION/PARTICIPATION Grade – 15%
 - LYDIA*, Empty Space, handouts on Analysis, Visual Storytelling, Composition
9. TWO EXAMPLES OF ARTWORK FOR COMPOSITION Grade – 5%
10. PICTURIZATION EXERCISE Grade - 5%
 - Choose a scene from any play (Not *LYDIA*) with 3-10 characters.

SCENES FOR CLASS

You will need three scenes for class. Only your final scene is from *LYDIA*.

1) Finals Scene: A scene from *LYDIA*;

These two projects below are done in class as labs:

2) Staging Exercise: A second scene that you choose with your partner, realism, 3-5 characters;

3) Creating Pictures: A third scene that you choose, anything, 3+ characters

DIRECTING III and IV

Directing III and IV are designed for the advanced study of directing, including the history of directing, conceptualization, working with designers and the process of rehearsal. There are limited resources in producing ETS so upper division classes have limited seats. Directing III and IV are open to Conservatory students only and directing majors are required to take these classes.

Students will be advanced to the upper division classes based on their grades in Directing I and the first 8 weeks of Directing II.

DUE DATES

ALL WORK IS DUE ON TIME. Any work handed in after the due date will affect your final grade.

ACCESSIBILITY/ACCOMODATIONS POLICY:

If you have a diagnosed learning or other disability that may have some impact on your work in this class or require accommodations, please see me so that these can be arranged. Please visit www.webster.edu and under Quick Links choose Academic Support Programs and then Academic Resource Center. Contact me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodation needs.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students at Webster University are expected to practice academic honesty. Plagiarism is intentionally claiming that another person's work is his/her own or implying that another person's work is his/her own (through inadequate or inaccurate citations of reference material.)

Students:

- Should not copy whole portions of text from another source as a major component of papers or projects.
- Should identify the title, author, page number/webpage address, and publication date of works when directly quoting small portions of texts, articles, interviews, or websites.
- Should appropriately identify the source of information when paraphrasing (restating) ideas from texts, interviews, articles, or websites.
- Should follow the guidelines of (faculty choice)

In its broadest sense, plagiarism is using someone else's work, presented or claimed as your own. Any time you borrow another person's work, whether as a direct quotation or paraphrased, you must use a citation. All citations must be properly documented and references must be provided. All papers and projects may be submitted to the *turnitin database* (if applicable) to determine if any part of the paper has been copied and not properly cited. Students who plagiarize will earn "no credit" for the assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, the student may fail the class / unit or be referred to the department chair and/or dean for disciplinary action.

CLASSROOM DECORUM

Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, all students are expected to be in class and prepared to begin on time. All pagers, wireless phones, or other electronic devices must be turned off, or switched to vibrate, when you enter the classroom. Disruption of class, whether by latecomers, noisy devices, or inconsiderate behavior is not acceptable. Students are expected to treat the instructor and other students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where a diversity of opinion arises. Students who engage in disruptive behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course.

CALENDAR - DIRECTING I
(Calendar subject to change)

August

WEEK ONE

- Tue. 28 Class expectations. What is Directing? Directing Exercise
ASSIGNMENT - Read LYDIA
- Thur. 30 Directing Exercise (cont.)
ASSIGNMENT - Read Directing Handout Analysis/Pgs. 2-21

September

WEEK TWO

- Tue. 4 Script Exploration: Given Circumstances & Dramatic Action – Bring *Lydia*
ASSIGNMENT - Read Directing Handout/Dramatic Action/Pgs. 22-26

DUE: LYDIA NEEDS TO BE READ

- Thu. 6 Dramatic Action & Beats/Unit Worksheet – Explore units from LYDIA
ASSIGNMENT – Begin Script Exploration for LYDIA
Read Directing Handout Promptbook/Pgs. 27-35

WEEK THREE

- Tue. 11 Creating a Promptbook/Discussion of Directing Research
- Thu. 13 Library Research Project for LYDIA- **Meet at the library, 2th floor balcony**
ASSIGNMENT – Meet with your Research Group members to organize a presentation of your information for the following class.

WEEK FOUR

- Tue. 18 Research Presentation – Each group presents research. **Meet back in Stage Three.**
ASSIGNMENT - Read Directing Handout Ground Plan/Pgs. 60-71,
- Thu. 20 Discuss Dynamic Ground Plan
ASSIGNMENT – **With a partner**, prepare for Staging Exercise - Select a play with 3-5 characters (not LYDIA). Pick 12-15 lines from that play, create a Ground Plan and Blocking outside of class. On the day of your exercise, choose actors and share the blocking, rehearse. **No rehearsal outside of class is necessary.**

WEEK FIVE

- Tue. 25 Ground Plan - Create a Ground Plan for LYDIA
- NEEDED: • Bring 1/4” graph paper, ruler, scissors and pencil to class or a computer program for drawing.**
• SCHEDULE AN OFFICE TIME TO DISCUSS GROUND PLAN
- ASSIGNMENT** - Read Directing Handout Visual Storytelling/Pgs. 72-93,

- Thu. 27 Discuss Visual Storytelling
ASSIGNMENT – Begin reading EMPTY SPACE. Be prepared for in-class discussion.

DUE: SUBMIT DIGITALLY: 2-3 PAGE SAMPLE OF ANALYSIS¹

October

WEEK SIX

- Tue. 2 Explore Staging in Class with A/B Scene (In Class Project, no prep necessary)

THE FANTASTICKS - Wednesday October 3 in Stage Three
Webster Works Worldwide – October 3

¹ Send a digital copy of the following: 2 Social quotes/comments, 2 Spiritual quotes/comments, 4 Relationship quotes/comments, 1 Character Journey (quote from beginning of play, quote from the end of the play).

Thu. 4 Bodies in Motion: Staging Exercises (these are the short scenes you and your partner chose with ground plan and blocking – (something other than *LYDIA*)

DUE: STAGING EXERCISES BEGIN

WEEK SEVEN

Tue. 9 Staging Exercises

Thu. 11 Staging Exercises

ASSIGNMENT – Read Composition link on Student Resource page of website.

WEEK EIGHT

Tue. 16 Staging Exercises

DUE: Written work for *LYDIA*

- GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES
See the attached requirements
- RESEARCH (Library Project and Additional Materials)
- PROMPTBOOK & DRAMATIC ACTION
 - Script with Units Indicated and Titled
 - Unit Worksheet
 - Ground Plan with Pre-blocking for the Scene
 - Prop list & Rehearsal Schedule

Thu. 18 Staging Exercises/Discuss Composition, Picturization & Object Use

ASSIGNMENT –Bring two (2) examples of artwork to next class to discuss composition. Choose images with humans in them. Pick material for which you have an affinity.

MID SEMESTER BREAK - OCTOBER 22-26

WEEK NINE

Tue. 30 No Class/Combat

ASSIGNMENT – Review Composition on Student Resource page of website.

November

Thu. 1 No Class/Combat

WEEK TEN

Tue. 6 Discuss Composition – Share artwork

DUE: TWO EXAMPLES OF ARTWORK

ASSIGNMENT –Prepare for the Picturization Exercise - Select a play with 3 or more characters (not *LYDIA*). Select a dynamic moment from that play and come prepared to stage a picture (with props) for that picture. **No outside rehearsal necessary.**

Thu. 8 Picturization Exercise

DUE: PICTURIZATION EXERCISES BEGIN

WEEK ELEVEN

Tue. 13 Picturization Exercise

ASSIGNMENT – Schedule outside rehearsal for instructor to watch *LYDIA* scene

Thu. 15 Discuss object use and articulating character through behavior
ASSIGNMENT – Bring a prop that has importance in your *LYDIA* scene and using classmates, demonstrate how that object reveals character through behavior.

WEEK TWELVE

Tue. 20 Articulating character through behavior

Thu. 21 NO CLASS/THANKSGIVING

WEEK THIRTEEN

Tue. 27 Articulating character through behavior

DUE: BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS *EMPTY SPACE*

THE THREE SISTERS - Wednesday November 28

Thu. 29 Discuss *EMPTY SPACE*

December

WEEK FOURTEEN

Tue. 4 No Class/Rehearse *LYDIA* on your own or catch up on homework

Thu. 6 Feedback on group rehearsals/Discuss final presentations, **meet in Stage III.**

WEEK FIFTEEN

Tue. 11 *LYDIA* Final Presentation

DUE: FINAL *LYDIA* SCENES BEGIN

Thu. 13 *LYDIA* Final Presentation

WEEK SIXTEEN

NO CLASS/Showings

Pre-Production

I. Given Circumstances – FOR THE ENTIRE PLAY

***Support this section with direct quotes from the dialogue**

A. Environmental Facts – Read Directing Handout for Specifics

- Where and When: Geographical, Date including Time of Day, Weather. Think of this as the Designer's Section. Break this out in your analysis and place your quotes for each element of design: including Sets/Architecture, Costume/ Clothing, Lights, Sound, and Props mentioned by the characters.
 - Economic environment
 - Political environment
 - Social environment
 - Spiritual environment
 - Relationships – State these as groupings: Mary/Bob, Mary/Betty, Bob/Betty, Mary/Bob/Betty. Indicate how these people interact with one another.
- *75% of your analysis will be done in Environmental Facts.*
- *In your analysis, always consider Environmental Facts in relationship to what the characters are trying to do to one another. The text is action. If a character is saying something they are acting upon another character.*

B. Previous action - List Main Points of Action that have occurred before the play begins.

C. Character Journey (The character's world view/attitude at the beginning of the play and how their attitude changes by the end of the play).

II. Character

Address each character in your scene

A. Objective

- a. Scene Objective
- b. Super Objective (overall objective for the play)

B. Obstacles standing in the characters' way

C. Five (5) quotes that say something about the character's in your scene (Five for each character in the scene)

D. Physical Description – Describe in your own words what this character is like. (as you see them).

E. Create a Dream Cast – Cast your entire play from professional stage and film actors, Provide photos of your dream cast for each role.

III. Idea

- A. Meaning of the title. Why this title, what is the power of the title, in your own words. Also provide the dictionary meaning of the words in your title (you don't need "the", "and" type words).
- B. Author's Statement Spoken by a Character – Find a quote the playwright has a character say in the play that captures what that states a strong idea about what the play means.
- C. In a sentence, what does the play mean to you – in your own words. Not plot, be concise. Ex: Man vs. Nature; Love Conquers All.

RESEARCH

I. Review(s) – Find reviews of the original production and notable revivals of the play. If there are no reviews on the play, look for writing about the author’s other work.

II. Critical writing on the work and author

Essays, articles, books, dissertations on the play (older more established works will have more, but always dig deep).

III. The historical era in which the play is set

(Ex: *COUNTRY WIFE* – Restoration England; *NORMAL HEART* – AIDS in the 80’s)

IV. Political, social and economic issues

(Ex: *ALL MY SONS* - War and economics; *THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN* – Ireland in the Depression)

V. Fashion, traditions and manners

(Ex: *THE COUNTRY WIFE*, *PAJAMA GAME*)

Era/Historical Context

Traditions

Manners

Economics

Fashion (Images

Social issues

VISUAL RESEARCH

I. Literal images (ex: the play takes place in a farmhouse, provide images of farmhouses).

II Abstract Images – find dynamic artwork that inspires you. Include these images in your promptbook:

PROMPTBOOK/DRAMATIC ACTION

I. Promptbook

A. Pre-blocking:

- Indicate your pre-blocking with arrows on small ground plans opposite of your text.
- Below the Ground Plan, describe in simple sentences what the arrows indicate and number each movement in your script.

B. Properties List - Keep in mind the power objects have to articulate character through action!

C. Rehearsal schedule - Describe how you would use 12 hours of rehearsal (Ex: 2 Hrs. Read Through/Discussion; 2 Hrs. Stage Pgs. 1-15; 2 Hrs. Explore character relationships)

D. Organization, Visuals and Creativity – Spend time making this book a place you enjoy visiting. Use visuals and drawings and quotes to create a safety net for yourself when you get off track in rehearsals.

II. Dramatic Action

A. Identify and Title the Units in your Promptbook. Make these titles active.

B. Unit Breakdown Worksheet (see below)

UNIT BREAKDOWN WORKSHEET

Act/Scene	Unit #	Unit Title	Who's Doing What to Whom	Revelation of Character Through Behavior (Activities relating to props, clothing, physical action)
Act I: Sc.2	Unit One	EX: Taking the Bull By The Horns	EX: Mark is trying to get his girlfriend to go on the elevator; Mary does not want to go to the party and won't get on the elevator	EX: Mark picks her purse up off the lobby bench and holds it hostage as he gets on the elevator; Mary shows Mark the car keys she still has in her hands – he can go up on the elevator but he'll walk home

DIRECTING I: SCENE EVALUATION

DIRECTOR: _____ SCENE _____

GROUNDPLAN

Strong Use of Diagonals, creating the "X" 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Imaginative Design of Upstage and Downstage R & L/Depth of stage

VISUAL TOOLS

Use of Depth/Levels for actors 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Use of Pictures to clarify relationships (allegiance,
power, comfort, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Compositions that are both intimate and expanded

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Movement

Actors movement on the diagonal
(avoid upstaging, profile, crossing right/left or upstage/downstage)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Use of the entire ground plan

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Activating actors into action that reflects character motivation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Clear sense of "who's doing what to whom", cause and effect, chess game

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Object Use

Revelation of character through object/costume use

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Overall Synthesis of the Visual Tools

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TOTAL POINTS _____

Comments: