

Theater: Directing II THEA 3720

Instructor - Doug Finlayson
Spring 2019
Class: Tue. 1-2:20

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Course Syllabus

OUTCOMES:

The student will:

- Demonstrate the ability to analyze a script and gather the necessary questions to ask in rehearsal through the creation of a play analysis and compiling a research packet that supplements the analytical work on the play;
- Demonstrate an understanding of what makes a strong ground plan;
- Present a rehearsed scene with actors that demonstrates the visual tools of the director;
- Demonstrate fundamental skills of actor coaching, including developing character through action, revelation of character through behavior, and meaningful compositions;
- Demonstrate skills in directing without language, presenting text without visuals, and adapting poetry to the stage through in class exercises.

ATTENDANCE

Students will be allowed one absence. Absences after that will affect the student's grade.

ASSESSMENT

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. GROUNDPLAN MEETING WITH DOUG | Grade - 5% |
| 2. ANALYSIS (Typed/Follow the handout)
20 page minimum | Grade - 15% |
| 3. PROMPT BOOK and DRAMATIC ACTION (Units with titles) for SCENE.
Included in the promptbook:
Pre-blocking, Props, Rehearsal Schedule | Grade - 10% |
| 4. RESEARCH of the PLAY/VISUAL RESEARCH | Grade - 10% |
| 5. PRESENTATION OF A SCENE.
8-10 minutes maximum
10 hours minimum, 12 hours maximum of rehearsal | Grade - 20% |
| You cannot direct the scene if the Pre-Production work is incomplete. | |
| 6. INSTRUCTOR'S REHEARSAL VISIT | Grade - 5% |
| 7. "EMERGENCE OF THE DIRECTOR" DISCUSSION | Grade - 5% |
| 8. VISUAL METAPHOR PROJECT | Grade - 5% |
| 9. DIRECTING THE LANGUAGE | Grade - 5% |
| 10. ALTERNATIVE LITERARY PROJECT | Grade - 5% |
| 11. LEADERSHIP (Organization, Timeliness, Independence) | Grade - 5% |
| 12. PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION | Grade - 10% |

INSTRUCTOR'S REHEARSAL VISIT

You will need to schedule one run through rehearsal visit with the instructor approximately a week before your final in-class presentation. We'll watch the scene and then have a conversation. About 30 minutes.

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 II

JANUARY

WEEK ONE

Tue. 15 Class expectations. Review Analysis/Ground Plan/Visual Storytelling
ASSIGNMENT - Read *Emergence of the Director* (Handout)

WEEK TWO

Tue. 22 Discuss Activities in Scenes/Exercise

DUE: FINAL SCENE SELECTION
Turn in a hard copy of your scene, character descriptions of each character in your scene, and essences of the type of actor you want.

WEEK THREE

Tue. 29 Discuss *Emergence of the Director*/Ground Plans

DUE: FIRST DRAFT OF YOUR GROUNDPLAN – USE A RULER or COMPUTER PROGRAM. NO HAND DRAWN GROUNDPLANS!

ASSIGNMENT: Make an office appointment with Doug to discuss draft version of your ground plan (bring it with you)

FEBRUARY

WEEK FOUR

Tue. 5 Creativity/Visual Metaphor Project Discussion
ASSIGNMENT: Prepare Visual Project

WEEK FIVE

Tue. 12 Present Visual Metaphor Projects

DUE: VISUAL METAPHOR PRESENTATIONS – DAY 1

February 13 VERA STARK

WEEK SIX

Tue. 19 Present Visual Metaphor Projects

DUE: VISUAL METAPHOR PRESENTATIONS – DAY 2

ASSIGNMENT: Read *Working with Designers*, pg. 36

WEEK SEVEN

Tue. 26 Communicating with Designers
ASSIGNMENT: Read *Actor Coaching*, pg. 94

MARCH

WEEK EIGHT

Tue. 5 Actor Coaching

DUE: Written work for your scene. DUE BY 5pm
GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES & RESEARCH
See the attached requirements
PROMPTBOOK & DRAMATIC ACTION

- Script with Units Indicated and Titled
- Ground plan with Pre-blocking for the Scene
- Prop list & Rehearsal Schedule

MID SEMESTER BREAK MARCH 11-15

WEEK NINE

Tue. 19 NO CLASS – Combat with Juniors 2019
ASSIGNMENT: Select a book, song, article, poem, children's book, or other non-dramatic literature to discuss as ideas to bring it to the stage.

REMINDER: You need to schedule a run through rehearsal for the instructor.

WEEK TEN

Tue. 26 Lighting with John Wylie
ASSIGNMENT: With your group, select 4-5 pages of text from a play of your choosing. Focus on Unit shifts, actor's beats, tempos, silence, and the potential for sound to enhance meaning. Directing the Language Presentations.

March 30 THE LITTLE PRINCE

APRIL

WEEK ELEVEN

Tue. 2 Directing the Language Presentations

DUE: DIRECING LANGUAGE PRESENTATIONS

April 5 PHOTOGRAPH 51

WEEK TWELVE

Tue. 9 Favorite Alternative Literary Material Discussion – How to take something non-theatre and make put it onstage.

DUE: ALTERNATIVE LITERARY PROJECT WRITTEN MATERIAL

WEEK THIRTEEN

Tue. 16 Scene Presentations

April 17 LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

WEEK FOURTEEN

Tue. 23 Scene Presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN

Tue.30 Scene Presentations/Wrap up

MAY

WEEK SIXTEEN

Tue. 7 NO CLASS/Showings

Pre-Production

I. Given Circumstances

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

A. Environmental Facts

- Where and When: Geographical,
Date. Any tidbit that talks about the world in which this play takes place
 - Economic environment
 - Political environment
 - Social environment
 - Spiritual environment
 - Relationships
- *Think of this as writing out a “script” for how you will talk about the text with actors in rehearsal.*
- *In your analysis, always consider Environmental Facts in relationship to what the characters are trying to do to one another. The text is action. So, 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 of the principal characters (The character’s world view/attitude at the beginning of the play and then their attitude at the end of the play - think “journey”).

Supply a quote from the beginning of the play and one from the end of the play as evidence of your idea on polar attitude.

II. Character

Address each character (Use these as a starting point)

A. Objective (characters in your scene)

- 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 (them must be living). Provide photos of your dream cast for each role.

III. Idea

A. Meaning of the title

B. Philosophical statements in the play – Find a quote the playwright has a character say in the play that captures what the author thinks the plays is about.

C. In a sentence, what does the play mean to you – in your own words. Not plot. Be brief.

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: *LADY WINDERMERE’S FAN*)

Era/Historical Context

Manners

Fashion (Images)

Traditions

Economics

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 II: 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
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Use of Pictures to clarify relationships (allegiance, power, comfort, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Compositions that are both intimate and expanded	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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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
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Use of the entire ground plan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Activating actors into action that reflects character motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Clear sense of “who’s doing what to whom”, cause and effect, chess game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Object Use

Revelation of character through object/costume use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Overall Synthesis of the Visual Tools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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TOTAL POINTS _____

Comments: