

THFM 3002-006 (3 credit hours)

SpSt: Approach to Directing

Fall 2018
TTH: 2:30-3:45 pm
Room 2T15

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Office Hours: TTH 3:45-4:30 or
by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as an introduction to the field of theatre directing. Through lectures and an engagement with written material, students will be introduced to issues of preparation, conceptualizing, staging, performance, and the shifting roles of theatre artists. Subjects covered will include: dramaturgy and historical research, script analysis and textual interpretation, the development of a production concept, casting, collaboration and communication with actors and designers, questions of fidelity and "auteurism," and ensemble development. In a limited way, we will also explore questions about the relationship between politics and aesthetic practice, the role of the audience, the institutional realities of professional theatre, multiculturalism and the politics of representation, and, most broadly, the role of theatre-making in our society. Considerable time will be spent studying and discussing the evolution of the director's role during the course of the 20th century and beyond, with the goal that such study should lead you to consider new perspectives and approaches in your future directing endeavours.

It is an assumption of the course that theatre directing is, by its nature, a fundamentally interdisciplinary activity. In order to develop any sense of a directorial point of view, the stage director becomes a student not only of theatrical practice but of politics, literature, visual art, music, philosophy, science, religion, current events, and so forth. Though some skills will be imparted, this course asks students to begin to think as directors.

Students are expected to bring effective note taking tools to each class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *John* by Annie Baker
- *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing* by Christopher Innes and Maria Shevtsova

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- *On Directing* by Harold Clurman
- *A Sense of Direction* by William Ball
- *Backwards and Forwards* by David Ball
- *Directing for the Stage* by Terry John Converse
- *Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers* by James Thomas
- *The Director's Craft* by Katie Mitchell
- *Fundamentals of Play Directing* by Alexander Dean & Laurence Carra
- *The Empty Space* by Peter Brook
- *A Director Prepares* by Anne Bogart

GRADING

Staging Assignment 1 (Thursday October 4 in class)	10%
Director’s Notebook Assignment (Tuesday October 16)	25%
Major Director Seminar – presented in pairs (Nov 8 – Nov 20)	20%
Staging Assignment 2 (Tuesday November 27 in class).....	15%
Play Response Paper (Wednesday December 5).....	30%

TOTAL	100%

Absences will be excused solely for medical or compassionate reasons. It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not to excuse a non-medical absence. After **FOUR** excused absences the student will be required to meet with the Instructor to discuss whether it is realistic for him/her to continue in the course.

Given the rigorous, practical nature of studio courses, and the demands these courses make in terms of attendance and punctuality, students with chronic medical conditions that will require extensive absence should meet with the instructor at the beginning of the term to discuss whether the course is appropriate for them.

Since the effectiveness of this class is dependent on full participation, unexcused absences will lead to deductions in the final mark. Students who miss three classes will have 10% of their final mark deducted. Students who miss four to six classes will be reduced by 20%. After missing six classes, each missed class will cause a further deduction in the final mark of 5%. Unexcused lateness will be penalized at 1% of the final grade/instance. After 3 lates, this will double to 2% of the final grade/instance.

Late Assignments will **NOT** be accepted.

ASSIGNMENTS

Staging Assignment 1:

Students, in groups of a minimum of 3, will prepare and present a brief scene (no longer than 3-minutes), featuring a story of their creation that focuses on the relationships of the characters in the scene. The scene will be wordless, or as wordless as possible (if a couple of words are required, that is acceptable). The focus of the scene will be on the telling of the story of the characters’ relationships, through the manipulation of SPACE, TIME & MOVEMENT. All of the group members will perform in the scene. During rehearsals, group members should each take turns stepping out and providing “directorial” input. The time and place of the scene should be clear. The setting should provide opportunities for motivated movement. The characters should have clear identities. They should have strong intentions, but should also be reactive “in the moment” to events and obstacles.

There will be a demonstration of this project in class.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade, and is due **Thurs October 4**, in class.

Director's Notebook Assignment:

Your assignment is to compile a preparatory notebook as if you were beginning the process of prepping to direct a production of *John* by Annie Baker.

The “notebook” will be a virtual one – pdfs and excel documents emailed to the instructor. This is a large assignment and does not require “padding” with floral language. Keep it direct, on point, clear and actionable.

The notebook will include:

- Your list of “Answers” about what exists before the action of the play. If some of your “Answers” started as questions, which you then answered through research, feel free to include the “Question” that you answered. Remember, this list includes information about the era, politics, attitudes to relationships, race, the history of the area, etc.
- Your list of “Answers” regarding Place and Time.
- Your list of “Answers” regarding Character Biographies.
- Your list of “Answers” regarding the Immediate Circumstances (what happened in the previous 24 hours) for Act 1, Scene 1.
- Your list of “Answers” for what happened between Act 1 and Act 2, and between Act 2 and Act 3.
- Choose ONE of the acts of the play, and:
 - On a copy of the act, draw a box around each EVENT in each scene. Include a brief explanation why you believe that to be an event – how do all the objectives change?
 - Identify Objectives for each character between each Event.
 - Identify the Obstacle(s) to each of these objectives.
 - Using a simple sentence, name each SCENE based on the main thing that happens throughout the scene – something that everyone does.
 - Using a simple sentence, name each ACT based on the main thing that happens throughout the ACT – something that everyone does.
- Research about the Playwright and about the play itself, including information on the play’s style/genre and any information you can gather on the playwright’s intentions for the production of the play – including performance style. Quotes from the playwright or from previous directors are encouraged. What concrete approaches to performance style, does this information add up to?
- A list of the big ideas that underpin the text – make sure that most of the characters have a relationship to these ideas – this is how you’ll know if your list is accurate. Identify the 1 big idea with which you have the greatest affinity, and describe how focusing on this will be made manifest in your production of the play.
- Choose one scene, from the Act you focused on, and create a ground plan for the set design. Describe how you would stage it. What insight and advice would you provide the actors? The lighting designer? The sound designer? How would the rhythms of the scene work? (Remember – SPACE, TIME & MOVEMENT...) What impact would you try to have on the audience, through this scene?

This assignment is worth **25%** and will be evaluated based on the clarity, relevance and internal logical consistency of your choices. **Due by 4:30pm, Tuesday October 16.**

Major Director Seminar

Directing is an art whose product is the most ambiguous, perhaps the most mysterious, in the theatre. The direction of a play is not visible like scenery or costumes; and unlike the actor's voice or the sound designer's score, it cannot be directly heard or sensed. And yet direction underlies everything we see and hear in the theatre. Utterly absorbed by the final theatrical experience, direction animates and defines that experience. A whole class of theatrical artists in our time has reached international eminence in this particular art. But what, exactly, is it? (Robert Cohen)

Working in pairs, and taking the directors and information in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing* as a starting point, students will prepare a seminar of no less than 20 minutes and no more than 30 minutes, on a major theatre director of the 20th and/or 21st Century. This seminar will be presented in class. The goal of the seminar is to thoroughly investigate the life and theatrical ideology of a major directorial figure in the global theatrical landscape and to explore the impact of that ideology on her/his work (both production and written), and on the larger world of the theatre; and to communicate the information and your understanding of its significance to the other members of the class: essentially – justify why your chosen figure is considered “major”. Where possible, this seminar must be in your own words, demonstrating an thorough understanding of your subject.

The seminar should include as much visual/auditory “evidence” as possible, including (where possible) video, pictures, diagrams, recordings, quotation, etc.

You are encouraged to consult regularly with the course instructor as you develop this project. The instructor should be informed at least 2 days prior to each presentation what A/V equipment will be required.

Provide the class, including the instructor, with a document that includes a summary of the information in your presentation, and a bibliography and list of citations.

Seminar groups and subjects must be submitted on Thursday, October 18.

Directors regularly need to lead clear, informative and inspiring presentations for their collaborators. This is an opportunity to practice this skill. This project will be evaluated on thoroughness, scope and detail of information; demonstration of thorough comprehension of the subject; successful justification of the subject's significance; and presentation quality – engaging, audible, use of supporting images, recordings, documentation, etc.

This project is worth **20%** of your final mark. Presentations will take place IN CLASS between **Thursday November 8 & Tuesday November 20.**

Staging Assignment 2:

Building on Staging Assignment 1, students in groups of a minimum of 3 will prepare and present a brief (3-minute maximum) scene from a published play of their choosing. Again, the focus of the scene will be on the relationships between the characters. The story of these relationships will be revealed through SPACE, TIME & MOVEMENT. However, there will now be the added element of the WORD. As a group you will make a decision about the degree of fidelity with which you will adhere to the playwright's intentions. You will be asked to justify this decision. All of the group members will perform in the scene. During rehearsals, group members should each take turns stepping out and providing “directorial” input. The time and place of the scene should be clear. The setting should provide opportunities for motivated movement. The characters should have clear identities. They should have strong intentions, but should also be reactive “in the moment” to events and obstacles. Text work should be clear. The use of subtext is also expected.

There will be a demonstration of this project in class.

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade, and is due **Tues November 27**, in class.

Play Response Paper

Students will see TWO productions in the Winnipeg fall theatre season, and will write a response to and comparison of each production, focusing on what you can observe of what the directors of each production have done. In what areas were the directors successful, partially successful or unsuccessful, and why?

The format of this paper is at your discretion, so long as it is clear and compelling. The paper should be submitted as a pdf by email to the instructor.

Consider Eleanor Fuchs' elements: what are SPACE and TIME like in the production? How are they evoked? What is the MOOD and TONE of the play – how are they created? What about the UNSEEN SPACES – how do they relate to the SEEN spaces? What about MUSIC? How are the PUBLIC and/or the PRIVATE worlds created? Is STATUS clear and compelling? POLITICS? PERFORMANCE STYLE? COSTUMING? How do people INTERACT? STAGE MOVEMENT – how do characters arrange themselves in relationship to each other and the setting? How does the director implement this? How is LANGUAGE used? How does PSYCHOLOGY function in this world? Has the Director made sense of that? Do the CHARACTERS' ACTIONS reveal their intentions/their inner life/their emotional subtext? Do they effectively and consistently inhabit the world created by the Director? And importantly: WHAT CHANGES? In setting, time, language, dress, mood, tone, action, character. Is the world of the play, at the end, TRANSFORMED? Were the characters convincingly transformed? Were YOU transformed? How? Why? How did the audience receive the piece? To what degree was the director responsible for their reaction?

Is the approach to performance style consistent among the performers? Is it the correct approach for the style/genre of the piece?

Thinking of the 5 categories of director in the textbook, what "type" of director directed these plays?

This is the most heavily weighted of the 5 assignments in this course, and should fully reflect your knowledge and understanding of the work of the Director in mounting a production.

The act of Directing is an act of judgment and discernment. It is the job of the Director to be hard to impress. This is an opportunity to practice this. This project will be evaluated based on your thoroughness, scope, insight and detail as you address all elements (and more?) listed above; demonstration of skilled perceptiveness in discerning the work of the director; your ability to clearly and skillfully express yourself in the written form. Directors are frequently required to write pitches, grant applications, festival application and director's notes, so spelling, grammar, punctuation and structure matter in this assignment.

This assignment is worth 30% of your final grade. **Due in pdf format by 4:30pm, Wednesday December 5.**

CONVERSION SCALE

For the calculation of the final grade the following conversion table will be used:

A+	90 – 100%	GPA	4.5	C+	65 – 69.9%	GPA	2.5
A	85 – 89.9%	GPA	4.25	C	60 – 64.9%	GPA	2.0
A-	80 – 84.9%	GPA	4.0	D	50 – 59.9%	GPA	1.0
B+	75 – 79.9%	GPA	3.5	F	below 50%	GPA	0
B	70 – 74.9%	GPA	3.0				

Work not submitted will be graded as 0%

DEFINITIONS OF GRADING DESCRIPTIONS

A+ Exceptional. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill **AND** great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

A Superior. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill **OR** great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

A- Excellent. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a high degree of skill and/or some elements of originality in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

B+ Very Good. Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a fairly high degree of skill in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

B Good. Good level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

C+ Competent. Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

C Fairly Competent. Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with some skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

D Barely Passing. Minimum knowledge of concepts and/or techniques needed to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

F Failing.

SCHEDULE – September 4 – November 29, 2018

- Schedule subject to change to reflect the needs of the class

Week 1 September	T4	Cover class business; introduce principles upon which the course is based What is Directing? Why is it necessary? Introduce elements of a Director's preparation. Assign: Read Fuchs article for next class Assign: Director's Notebook for <i>John</i> by Annie Baker. Due IN CLASS: Tuesday October 16. Assign: Play response paper, Due IN CLASS: Wednesday December 5. Assign: Reading schedule for <i>The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing</i> – see schedule below. Assign: Director Seminar – see schedule below
	R6	Prep continued: Small planet, big ideas.
Week 2	T11	The director and design – Guest Lecturer: Adam Parboosingh
	R13	Analyzing Action
Week 3	T18	Analyzing Action continued
	R20	Introduce Staging Assignment 1 with demonstration – Due: Thursday Oct 4
Week 4	T25	Casting How will you rehearse...how DO you rehearse?
	R27	First days of rehearsal Working scenes
Week 5 October	T2	Tech & run Not in our Spaces
	R4	Due: Staging Assignment 1
		READING WEEK. HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Week 6	T16	Seminar Discussion on <i>Cambridge Intro</i> : Ch 1 & 2 Due: Director's Notebook
	R18	Seminar Discussion on <i>Cambridge Intro</i> : Ch 3 Due: Major Director Seminar groups and topics
Week 7	T23	Seminar Discussion on <i>Cambridge Intro</i> : Ch 4
	R25	Seminar Discussion on <i>Cambridge Intro</i> : Ch 5
Week 8	T30	Seminar Discussion on <i>Cambridge Intro</i> : Ch 6 Assign: Staging Assignment 2 – create groups, choose a scripted 3-person scene from a published play, from which you can pull 2-3 good minutes for performance. Due: Tuesday November 6
November	R1	Seminar Discussion on <i>Cambridge Intro</i> : Ch 7 Director's Notebooks will be returned today or next class
Week 9	T6	In-class demonstration of Staging Assignment 2
	R8	Due: Major Director Seminar x 2
Week 10	M12	<i>Voluntary Withdrawal Date</i>
	T13	Due: Major Director Seminar x 2
	R15	Due: Major Director Seminar x 2
Week 11	T20	Due: Major Director Seminar x 2
	R22	Class will attend Levels and Cueing Session of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> at the Gas Station Theatre (445 River Ave. in Osborne Village) during class time.
Week 12	T27	Due: Staging Assignment 2
	R29	Debrief and discuss
December	W5	Due (by 4:30pm): Play response paper

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

This class involves physical, cognitive, and/or vocal demands. Those with challenges in these areas must seek departmental guidance PRIOR to registration: 204-786-9955 or theatre@uwinnipeg.ca.

"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW**: Sept 19th (Donna-Michelle St. Bernard, playwright and arts administrator), Oct 17th, Nov 14th, Jan 16th, Feb 27th, Mar 13th. This series will feature speakers from a range of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. These speakers will specifically address issues related to “the business of the business.”

Attendance is mandatory for all Honours classes and some 3000-level classes (please check with your instructor). Attendance for potential Theatre Honours/Majors and for Film Majors is optional but highly recommended.

HEALTH AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Life happens to everyone. If you are experiencing a crisis in your life, or if you have a physical or mental health issue, communicate with your Professor or Accessibility Services – let us know so we can provide support or direct you to those who can. The earlier we know, the earlier we can discuss what resources might be available. Students with documented disabilities, or temporary or chronic medical conditions requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams/presentations (e.g., private space or more time) or during lectures/labs (e.g., note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 204-786-9771 or accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca to discuss appropriate options. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential. If you are registered with Accessibility Services, do not assume that Accessibility Services (AS) has informed your instructor that you have registered with them. <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>

2018 ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to welcome students to the new term, introduce our new students to faculty and other students; provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and deliver news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Monday, September 10, 2018, 12:30-13:20 in Theatre, 1T15. ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY** for all Majors and Honours students. Those considering Honours are strongly recommended to attend. All others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

TAFSA

All students enrolled in at least one theatre or film class are automatically members of TAFSA, the Theatre and Film Students' Association, which plans a number of exciting activities each academic year. We are looking forward to regular **Performance Jams** and **Socials** as well as **DioFest** (a new play festival featuring student written and produced plays), and the very popular **24/7 Event** during which students move into our building and several plays are written, rehearsed, produced, and presented – all in a period of 24 hours! Please join TAFSA to find out more at its organizational meeting, tentatively scheduled for Mon Sept 17, 12:30-1:20 pm, Room OT10. This is a great opportunity for students to connect with other like-minded people and a way to get involved in the department events.

BUILDING SECURITY

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (home to the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 am and 5:30 pm weekdays only. Students are permitted to be in the building between 8:00 am and 10:00 pm seven days per week (except statutory holidays when the University is closed) **BUT PLEASE NOTE:** outside of regular building hours, it is **MANDATORY** that everyone in the building **EITHER** carry an access card **OR** have a booking confirmation form in their possession (hard copy or electronic). **ALL EVENING STUDENTS in the building for classes MUST have an access card.** If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, **you may be evicted.**

These rules are in place to protect our students and our equipment; please respect them.

ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA

Students must check our website at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/theatre-film> and read the menu items called *Fire Safety Instructions in the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film*, *Access Card/Building Use Policy* **AND** *Room Booking Instructions*. The link to the electronic *Online Room Booking Form* is also found at this location. Please read and note all instructions carefully.

GENERAL NOTES

This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.

Archival records such as videotapes, sound recordings, and photographs may be made or taken during class or lab times. The University uses such materials primarily for archival, promotional, and teaching purposes. Promotional use may include display at open houses or conferences, or use in advertising, publicity, or brochures. In reading and accepting the terms in this course outline, students acknowledge consent for such use by the University. Should a student not wish to convey such consent, s/he should withdraw from this course immediately.

Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes and examinations; texting is **NOT** permitted in class.

Any student attending a test or final examination may be required to present proof of identity; photo identification is preferred.

It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or computer disk copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

Students are strongly advised to read the sections 8, 9, and 10 of the *Academic Calendar* for information on Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals, (found on-line at: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/regulationsandpolicies.pdf>).

Students conducting research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, including a family member, must obtain the approval of the appropriate ethics committee before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities in class as a learning exercise. See <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/human-ethics.html> for submission requirements and deadlines.

All students, faculty and staff have the right to participate, learn and work in an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination. The UW Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy may be found online at www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect.

Students may choose not to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religion, but they must notify their instructors at least two weeks in advance. Instructors will then provide opportunity for students to make up work examinations without penalty. A list of religious holidays can be found at <http://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/important-notes.pdf>

When it is necessary to cancel a class due to exceptional circumstances, instructors will make every effort to inform students via uwinnipeg email (and/or using the preferred form of communication, as designated by the instructor), as well as the Departmental Assistant and Chair/Dean so that class cancellation forms can be posted outside classrooms. ***Students are reminded that they have a responsibility to regularly check their uwinnipeg e-mail addresses to ensure timely receipt of correspondence from the university and/or their course instructors.***

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2018 is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin which begin September 4 and end December 3, 2018 (2018-19 Fall Term).

Please note that withdrawing before the VW date does not necessarily result in a fee refund.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

Theatre is a communal art form in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people co-operate to create a work of art. This fact is necessarily transferred to the learning situation, and is reflected in many of the Department's courses. Consequently, it is the Department's policy that students are required to: complete homework such as reading, line-learning, script analysis, prop lists, design drawings, etc.; attend classes; attend rehearsals both within and outside of class times; and, in short, to exhibit commitment towards the inevitably shared endeavours of our field of study.

Any student failing to fulfil these requirements is harmful to the progress of dedicated students and may, after due warning, be asked to withdraw from any individual Departmental course.

COURSE CONTENT NOTE

All Theatre and Film Classes

Dramatic Literature depicts a wide variety of human action, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. The Department of Theatre and Film will not undertake to censor the subject matter of dramatic works.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of content and style in drama/film are urged to discuss these concerns with the course instructor.

Performance-Related Classes

Much of an actor's work is based upon actual experiences of life which become translated into fictional

circumstances. Because of this, the teaching of acting may involve encouraging the student to examine personal and even intimate areas of life to help him or her access life experiences appropriate to the demands of the work.

Dramatic literature depicts a wide range of human actions, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. Acting students must learn to simulate life truthfully in interaction with other students in the safety of the acting class and the rehearsal hall through exercises, discussions, and directions which address rather than avoid truthful, particularized, personalized action.

Performance classes often require strenuous physical activity. Classes may also involve physical interaction between students as part of class exercises or character development and occasional physical contact by instructors for purposes such as the demonstration of a technique or to make a posture correction. Students are responsible for wearing clothing appropriate to these activities.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of actions and subject matter involved in drama are urged to discuss these concerns with their course instructor.