

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 305: Directing – 62855
TERM: FALL 2018
DAY/TIME: Monday/Wednesday, 4 – 5:50 pm
LOCATION: MCC 109
INSTRUCTOR: Christopher Shaw
OFFICE: JEF Building 2nd floor #211
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment
CONTACT: shawchri@usc.edu
(323) 632-4894 (c - Text OK)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will actively examine the fundamental principles of directing for the stage. Topics covered in this course will include script analysis, practical approaches to staging theatrical realism, directorial presentation skills, techniques for communicating with actors, rehearsal techniques, and the creation of the director's prompt book.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

A Sense of Direction by William Ball

Notes on Directing by Frank Hauser

Two 3-Ring Binders (½"-1") (purchased by the 2nd class) ***and labeled divider tabs*** for binders equal to numbered sections dictated in Director Prompt Book (per PDF document provided)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Conceive and direct a 2 minute scene based on a visual image selected by the student.
2. Direct a 3-5 minute scene from TBD
3. Direct a 3-5 minute scene from a contemporary play of your choice TBD
4. Conduct an in-class rehearsal and do a final presentation for all scenes.
5. Conduct oral directorial presentation for two scenes.
6. Conduct a minimum of two rehearsals per week outside of class time for all scenes.
7. Submit the following written documentation for 2 of the above mentioned scenes:
 - a) Director presentation material (Image Scene, Final Scene)
- due after your presentation
 - b) Director prompt book, complete sections per PDF guidelines (Image Scene, Second Scene)
- due the first class after your presentation.
8. Show readiness and fully engaged participation in all class discussions and text readings as well as complete all assigned readings.
9. Provide fully engaged participation for all exploratory and analytical work.

10. Be available to act in a fellow director's scene for which you will receive extra credit of 2 points
11. Equal time must be given in each group to each scene / director project in outside rehearsals.
12. Props and Costumes must be provided by the actors and directors for in-class rehearsals and scene presentations – no “miming” objects please.

FINAL EXAMINATION

The final examination in this class will be the scene presentation of your final scene.

GRADES

Scene work in class rehearsal (2 graded at 10 points each) :	20 points
Scene work presentations (3 graded at 10 points each) :	30 points
Director presentation Image Scene:	5 points
Director presentation Final Scene:	10 points
Written prompt books, completed per guideline (two graded at 10 points each):	20 points
Class participation and collaboration:	15 points

GRADE BREAKDOWN

1. **SCENE WORK** For each directed scene assignment, the student is expected to perform well in each of four distinct categories:

- A. Follow directions of the assignment (in guidelines, in rubric and explained in class).
- B. Lead a rehearsal that demonstrates skills being taught in class (in guidelines, in rubric and explained in class)
- C. Demonstrate that the scene is well prepared, and exciting to watch, and in service of a clear and vivid story
- D. Display a creative physical use of the space and the actors through staging and ground plan choices, guiding of performances, and creative and economical design choices

A Grading rubric for both in class rehearsals and final presentations, director presentation and prompt book will be made available to review.

2. **DIRECTOR PRESENTATION** Each directorial presentation must be no longer than 5 minutes and incorporate visual aids. Details will be discussed in class.
Grading rubric for director presentations will be made available to review

3. **WRITTEN WORK THAT ACCOMPANIES SCENE WORK** The student is expected to perform well in each of the following categories:

- A. Your prompt book must be neat, following the directions that are given, thoroughly documented, and show creative insights into text analysis and realization of directorial ideas on paper.
- B. Your written self-assessment must include detailed working objectives and a clear description of the extent to which you achieved them.

For more specific requirements, please see guidelines and grading rubric.

4. PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION GRADE BREAKDOWN GUIDELINES, EXPECTATIONS AND HINTS

I expect students who want to be in the classroom, and want to perform well. “Performing well” means that spelling and grammar are perfect, the assignment is well thought out, clearly understood and presented, and that you perform beyond the simple limits of the instructions. I also expect students to communicate if they have questions about instructions or vocabulary. As the course moves quickly, you may have to attend an office hour in order to get your questions answered. But ask them.

For scene work and written work, grades will be earned as follows:

“**A**”- Performance of the student has been at the highest level, showing sustained excellence in meeting all course requirements and exhibiting an unusual degree of intellectual and creative initiative.

“**B**”- Performance of the student has been at a high level, showing consistent and effective achievement in meeting course requirements.

“**C**”- Performance of the student has been at an adequate level, meeting the basic requirements of the course.

“**D**”- Performance of the student has been less than adequate, meeting only the minimum course requirements.

“**F**”- Performance of the student has been such that minimal course requirements have not been met.

When the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been excellent or good and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100 points
A- = 90-92 points
B+ = 87-89 points
B = 83-86 points
B- = 80-82 points
C+ = 78-79 points
C = 75-77 points
C- = 70-74 points
D+ = 68-69 points
D = 65-67 points
D- = 61-64 points
F = 60 or below

The final course grade is articulated as a Letter Grade. This grade is translated into a G.P.A using the following scale: **A = 4; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2; C- = 1.7; D = 1; F = 0.** When the average falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class has been good, but will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

ATTENDANCE:

Absences/Tardiness:

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of **100%** of the group, and as we are using each other as actors as we explore directing, **No absences or tardies are allowed. Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.** *Attendance is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines*

Note: *If a deadline is missed because of a classmate/ project partner's unavailability, the available partner/s will not be penalized. If problems arise, a discussion with the professor with all involved must be arranged before the day of the scheduled scene or everyone will be held equally accountable.*

All written work turned in will contain the following or will not be accepted:

1. Your name
2. Course name, number, and section
3. Assignment label
4. Date
5. Must be stapled or in binder in orderly fashion

DUE DATES All assigned due dates must be met on time with proper preparation. No late papers will be accepted. Students absent from presentation date without an official excused absence will receive a 0 for that portion of assignment. All directors are required to have a back-up exercise or rehearsal plan to work on with the actors (s) if an actor is missing from in-class rehearsal portion of project.

RESPECTING THE COURSE AND SPACE Everything you do in class is reflected in your grade, especially your participation and collaboration with your colleagues. Please respect the space, your colleagues, and the working environment. This includes arriving early, being proactive and prepared, being helpful to others in class when they ask for it, and returning the room to its "status quo" condition at the end of class.

MISSED WORK DUE TO EXCUSED ABSENCE Because of the compacted schedule, you cannot make up a presentation, in-class rehearsal, or final scene rehearsal. Exceptions will not be made to this policy. Check your calendars to ensure that important dates in this class do not fall on important dates for you during the semester. Due to the nature of this workshop class, in-class participation (and any collaborative exercises done in class) cannot be made up. Homework assigned on the day of your absence can be obtained from one of your colleagues. I do not accept late work for any unexcused absence.

REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE Being absent for an in-class or scheduled out of class rehearsal is not acceptable. Be early and ready to work for all rehearsals. Be responsible for creating a good working environment. Be respectful of others. Set up agreed rehearsal times and honor them.

Any physical demands must be simulated and properly discussed and rehearsed so as not to endanger yourself, your actors or scene partners, or classmates. This includes the use of or throwing of properties. No smoking, eating, drinking or littering in class. Clean up room after your work: it must be in order for classes. Weapons of any sort (real knives, guns etc...) are not to be used in scene work, ever. If your scene requires a weapon of any sort, request a fake “prop” one from me for the in class rehearsal. These policies apply to all in-class exercises and outside rehearsals.

SUBJECT TO CHANGE The material covered may adjust to accommodate change in student numbers, or a necessity in student learning. This is due to the large amount of in-class work and scheduling of rehearsals and presentations. Please be flexible, if needed.

ATTIRE Wear comfortable clothing that is easy to move in. No flip flops are allowed in class. Wear appropriate clothes for presentation, rehearsal and performance days.

SAFETY Use common sense when rehearsing and when in class. You are responsible for your own safety and the safety of your classmates and scene partners. Be sensible.

PHONES Please turn off phones and electronic equipment before entering class. Please be respectful of your professor and colleagues. Individuals who are repeat offenders will be asked to leave class.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Week #1

Monday 8/20/18: Introduction. Course outline and expectations. (Incl. Shaw Discussion Points)
Discuss “Image Scene” homework/ Directors Prompt Book. Discuss casting and outside rehearsals.

HOMEWORK DUE WEDNESDAY 8/22/18:

Find Image(s) for Image Scene, bring one or two printed out in color
Read PDF “Blocking” (from Jon Jory “Tips – Ideas for Directors”) (39 pages)
Read PDF “Blocking” (from William Ball “A Sense of Direction”) (7 pages)
Read PDF “ Helping Actors Communicate Through Groundplans” (9 pages)

Wednesday 8/22/18: Discuss Directors Prompt Book, Directors Presentation, Image Scene
All Students Informally Present and discuss Image Scene “Images”
SIGN UP FOR DIRECTOR PRESENTATION

WEEKEND HOMEWORK prep for week #2 :

Answer “prompts” for Image Scene (Per PDF / Document Provided) typed out placed in 3 ring binder
Begin prep for Director Presentation for “Image Scene” (Per PDF/ Document Provided)
Read *A Sense of Direction* Pages 3-36
Read *Notes on Directing*, Preface – 14
Review PDF readings on Blocking and Groundplan for discussion

Week #2

Monday 8/27/18 – Discuss reading assignments.

Address questions about Image Scene and Director Presentation.

Exercise – Blocking and Composition / Groundplan in space and Blocking Notation

HOMEWORK DUE WEDNESDAY 8/29:

Read *A Sense of Direction* “Auditions and Casting” Pages 37-43

Read *Notes on Directing*, “Casting” Pages 17-20

Wednesday 8/29/18 -

Director Presentations: Image Scene (50% of class) (**Graded**)

Discuss Image Scene Prompt Questions and Image Scene Prompt Book

ALL – Present Image Scene Casting

Discuss “Stages of Rehearsal”

Sign Up for In Class Rehearsal (Which will be examining stages of rehearsal)

WEEKEND HOMEWORK: Begin preliminary work on Director Prompt Book for Image Scene

Including groundplan and preliminary blocking

Read *A Sense of Direction* Pages 44-92

Read *Notes on Directing* Pages 23 – 67

Week #3

(Monday 9/3/18)

OFF LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

HOMEWORK DUE WEDNESDAY 9/5/18:

Continue work on Image Scene Prompt Book Including groundplan and preliminary blocking

Read *A Sense of Direction* Pages 44-92

Read *Notes on Directing* Pages 23 – 67

Wednesday 9 /5/18

Director Presentations: Image Scene (50% of class) (**Graded**)

Discuss Weekend reading

Begin In-Class Rehearsals “Table Work” 2 Scenes (Note: I will look at your prompt book to see that you have the beginning stages of the work including ground plan and preliminary blocking ideas)

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Continue work on Image Scene Director Prompt Book (Note: I will look at your prompt book before your in class rehearsal to see that you have the beginning stages of the work including ground plan and preliminary blocking ideas)

Begin Image Scene Rehearsals “Table Work” (If signed up for in class “Table Work” stage or “Blocking Rehearsals” you can wait to do that stage for your in-class rehearsal)

Week #4

Monday 9 /10/18

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Table Work / Blocking Rehearsals
4 Scenes @ 20 min each

Wednesday 9/12 /18

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Blocking Rehearsals / Stop – Start
4 Scenes @ 20 min each

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Continue work on Image Scene Director Prompt Book
Image Scene Rehearsals

Week #5

Monday 9/17/18

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Stop Start /Fine- Tune
4 Scenes @ 20 min each

Wednesday 9/19/18

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Fine – Tune
4 Scenes @ 20 min each

Week #6

Monday 9/24/18

Group 1 - PRESENT 6 Image Scenes (**Graded**)
And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”
Group 1 Prompt Books Due Next Class

Wednesday 9/26/18

PRESENT 6 Image Scenes (**Graded**)
And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”
Group 1 Prompt Books Due (**Graded**)
Group 2 Prompt Books Due Next Class

WEEKEND HOMEWORK: Read “Really Really” and Second Play (TBD) applying concepts of how to read script form *Notes on Directing* and *A Sense of Direction* as well as suggestions in *Prompt Book Guidelines* . Continue work on Image Scene Prompt Book.

Week #7

Monday 10/1/18

PRESENT 6 Image Scenes (**Graded**)

And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”

Group 2 Prompt Books Due (**Graded**)

Group 3 Prompt Books Due Next Class

HOMEWORK BEFORE WEDNESDAY 10/3/18:

Read Play of Choice (Between “Really Really” or Second Play TBD) - More than once, as a director would – Choose a scene that interests you

Wednesday 10 /3/18

READ THRU “Really Really”

Discussion

Submit Scene Choices / Casting

Sign – Up In Class Rehearsals “Really Really” / “TBD Play”

Group 3 Image Scene Prompt Books Due (**Graded**)

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Begin directors prompt book work on Scene from “Really Really” / “TBD Play”

Read *A Sense of Direction* Pages 93-124

Read *Notes on Directing* Pages 69-102

Week #8

Monday 10/8/18

Discuss Weekend reading

In Class Rehearsal “Really Really” / “TBD Play” Table Work (**Graded**)

2 Scenes

Wednesday 10/10/18

In Class Rehearsal “Really Really” / “TBD Play” (**Graded**)

Table Work or Blocking Rehearsals

4 Scenes

Homework: “Really Really” / “TBD Play” Prompt Book, Rehearse, Begin Searching for your “Vision Scene” (Final Scene you have a strong vision, connection, understanding or passion for – should be a modern contemporary play in prose , not classical in verse)

Week #9

Monday 10/15/18

In Class Rehearsal “Really Really” / “TBD Play” (**Graded**)

Blocking Rehearsals or Stop Start = 4 Scenes

Week 9 (Continued)

Wednesday 10/17/18

In Class Rehearsal “Really Really” / “TBD Play” **(Graded)**

Stop Start Rehearsals or Fine Tune

4 Scenes

Weekend Homework: Prompt Book, Rehearse, *Begin Searching for “Vision Scene” (Final Scene* you have a strong vision, connection, understanding or passion for – should be a modern contemporary play in prose, not classical verse)

Week #10

Monday 10/22/18

In Class Rehearsal “Really Really” / “TBD Play” **(Graded)**

Fine- Tune Rehearsals - 4 Scenes

Wednesday 10 /24/18

Group 1 - PRESENT 5 Scenes **(Graded)**

And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”

Group 1 Prompt Books Due Next Class

Homework: Prompt Book, Rehearse, *Begin Searching for your “Vision Scene” (Final Scene* you have a strong vision, connection, understanding or passion for – should be a modern contemporary play in prose , not classical in verse

Week #11

Monday 10/29/18

Group 2 - PRESENT 5 Scenes **(Graded)**

And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”

Group 1 Prompt Books Due **(Graded)**

Group 2 Prompt Books Due Next Class

Wednesday 10/31/18

Group 3 - PRESENT 5 Scenes **(Graded)**

And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”

Group 2 Prompt Books Due **(Graded)**

Group 3 Prompt Books Due Next Class

****Submit Vision Scene Choices and Casting**

Weekend Homework Before 11/ 7/18

Prepare and Rehearse Director Presentation for Final “Vision Scene” (Scene of your Choice)

Follow Director Presentation Guidelines

ALL Director Presentations (timed at 5 minutes) will go on Wednesday 11/7/18

Week #12

Monday 11/5/18

Group 4 PRESENT 3 Really Really Scenes (**Graded**)

And group feedback “what worked, what you would have liked to have seen more of?”

Group 3 Prompt Books Due (**Graded**)

Group 4 Prompt Books Due Next Class

Sign-up for In Class Rehearsals for Vision Scenes

Wednesday 11/7/18

All Director Presentations – 5 minutes Each (**Graded**)

Week #13

Monday 11/12/18

In Class Rehearsals

4 Scenes “Table Work” - (**Graded**)

Wednesday 11/14/18

In Class Rehearsals

4 Scenes “Table Work” or “Blocking” - (**Graded**)

Week #14

Monday 11/19/18

In Class Rehearsals

5 Scenes “Stop - Start” - (**Graded**)

Week #14 (Continued)

(Wednesday 11/21/18) OFF THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week #15

Monday 11/26/18

In Class Rehearsals

5 Scenes “Fine Tune ” - (**Graded**)

Week #15 (continued)

Wednesday 11 /28/18

Present 9 Final Scenes (**Graded**)

FINAL DAY OF CLASS: 11/28/18

FINAL EXAM:

Wednesday December 5th 4:30 -6:30 FINAL – Present 9 Final Scenes (Graded)

The Final is dictated by the creative process of the class so specifics will be discussed later in the semester.

Additional Policies

- *Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class at any time.*
- *Please use restroom before class and during break, do not interrupt the flow of class by leaving studio unless for an emergency at which point you must inform instructor by raising hand and entire class will take the one 2 minute break at that time*
- *There is absolutely no technology allowed in the classroom. No cellphones, no computers. No texting , no social media – TURN THEM OFF AND PUT THEM AWAY Anyone caught using cellphone in class will be held responsible for destroying the working atmosphere in the classroom and graded accordingly Exceptions will be for director presentations and effects needed for scene presentations*
- *All students must help with the set up and strike of every class*
- *Students must place all extraneous belongings, (backpacks, sweaters, jackets, skateboards, laptops, cell phones, etc.) in the designated corner of the classroom at the start of class*
- *Students must be in proper rehearsal clothes (whatever they may be and understand that they change throughout the semester) at the start of class. NO FLIP FLOPS UNLESS THE SCENE OR CLASS TAKES PLACE AT THE BEACH!*

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work

as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/departement-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options/ resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.