

**Instructor: Tim Dang**

**Office: TBA**

**Office Hours:** Generally one hour before class and/or one hour after class. Appointments encouraged.

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**Teaching Assistant or Assistant Instructor: N/A**

**Contact Info: N/A**

### **Course Description and Overview**

Examination of basic directorial principles and vision of play production. Pre-production analysis, telling the story, and rehearsal procedures; relationship of the director to actor, playwright, and design team; integration of technical aspects of production. Course focus will emphasize developing strength and confidence in the areas of communication and collaboration building leadership skills.

### **Learning Objectives**

- 1) To acquire a basic understanding of the skills and procedures required of a stage director to mount a theatrical production.
- 2) To encourage the cultivation of leadership skills necessary in the creation of an ensemble brought together for the purpose of play production.
- 3) To embrace the role of the director as a collaborative individual, able to articulate and shape the vision while embracing the creativity of the design team and actors
- 4) To gain practical experience in the role of director through classroom exercises and in the presentation of scene-work directed by the student.
- 5) To learn other principles of theatre productions such as budgets, marketing, publicity, script development, audience engagement, and fundraising.

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

- ***A Sense of Direction*** by William Ball (Required reading)\*
- ***Kentucky*** by Leah Nanako Winkler (Required reading)\*
- **A Play of Your Choice** for your Vision Play (Final Project)
- **A Director's Journal** (binder/notebook/folder) is required for three purposes. 1) A section to serve as a journal of notes taken during class as well as holding any handouts that will be accumulated throughout the semester; 2) A section for comments from observing your fellow classmates directing scenes for mid-terms and for finals; and 3) A section for your personal research, vision, and log (dates of rehearsal, copy of scene with blocking, prop list, etc.) as you prepare your directing scene (from ***Kentucky*** for mid-terms and Vision Play for finals.

- Students are responsible for providing necessary props, costumes and set pieces for scene work. Please be prepared on the day that your scene is to be performed.
- Students must also make sure that the actors selected for their scene are available the day and time your scene is to be performed.

\*These materials are available through the USC Bookstore, online, or at theatrical bookstores such as Samuel French Bookstore in Hollywood, CA.

#### **Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments Grading**

<b>30 points</b>	Class assignments and observed rehearsals throughout semester
<b>20</b>	Directing a scene from <i>Kentucky</i>
<b>10</b>	Submission of Director's Journal as your Midterm
<b>25</b>	Directing a scene from your <b>Vision Play</b>
<b>15</b>	Submission of Director's Journal as your Final
	Extra Credit (TBA)

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**100 points**      Total Points Possible

**Grading Scale for SDA:** **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

#### **Attendance, Time Requirements, and Classroom Rules**

- 1) To give yourself the most positive experience in directing 305A, be punctual, prepared, and responsible, as other students are depending on you. Remember, you are the director and you set the example and tone for the process.
- 2) This is a process-oriented class. Attendance is imperative. Class exercises and discussions are experimental in nature and make up work is not possible. Scheduled observed rehearsals that are missed will not/cannot be rescheduled.
- 3) Late work may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor and then will be docked no less than two points per day past due. Written work that is accepted after the date must be date stamped in the DRC administrative office before being placed in the instructor's mailbox. All written work must be submitted in hardcopy.
- 4) There are no unexcused absences. Three tardy episodes constitute one absence.
- 5) Acting in 305A scenes are encouraged and will count as one point of extra credit towards your final grade. If this occurs in another section of 305A, please bring documentation of participation. A maximum of two extra credit points are possible per semester even if you participate in more than two directing 305A scenes.
- 6) Each student will maintain a Director's Journal containing: classroom notes, observations, and comments upon viewing other students' in-class rehearsals and scene presentations. This may be checked and referenced during observed rehearsal and is turned in as a major component after all scenes are completed for midterms and finals.

- 7) Your Vision Playbook (section 3 of the Directors Journal) includes all additional prep material specific to your rehearsal process for midterm and final scenes due at the time of student directors' presentations. Your Vision Playbook should include (for midterm and final projects) the following components;
- Vision of your directing the entire production (not just the scene performed in class)
  - Director's journaling of your rehearsals and process
  - Reference and research pertinent to the play
  - Ground a plan/environmental sketches to the best of your ability
  - Your character descriptions and prop lists. The director's rehearsal script with margin notes and beat breakdown
  - A summary discussion of the director's experience and development of process. For your summary discussion, what surprised you? Was anything exactly what you expected? What did you find "easy"? What provided the greatest challenge? Be sure to also include ideas/projections as to how you would fine-tune the process next time. Make use of references from A Sense of Direction and pertinent classroom discussions.
  - Director's Journal is handed in the day when all mid-term scene presentations are complete. Director's Journal is handed in for the second time on the day of finals when all scene presentations have been completed.
  - Check your USC email regularly. Scheduling changes and other timely information may be sent electronically.
  - Cell phones are to be turned off for the duration of class.
  - Electronic capture of any portion of class is strictly prohibited without prior approval of the instructor.

### **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown\***

Week 1	8/21	Introduction. Course outline and expectations
	8/23	Discussion: The role of the director and your relationship to other theater makers. (Read A Sense of Direction through page 36 by 8/28)
Week 2	8/28	Discussion: Creativity, networking, authenticity for success (Read Kentucky by Leah Nanako Winkler by 9/4)
	8/30	Discussion: Initial instinct, play analysis, forming a vision (Read A Sense of Direction pages 37 – 92 by 9/6)
Week 3	9/4	Discussion: Kentucky – themes, characters, tone (Choose scenes to direct by 9/6)
	9/6	Discussion: auditions and objectives. Scene selection and order for Kentucky. (Read A Sense of Direction pages 93-149 by 9/13)

Week 4	9/11	Discussion: Working with actors and other collaborative members of the production. (Read A Sense of Direction pages 150-177 by 9/20)
	9/13	Discussion: Rehearsals and the environment you create for the story and the environment you create for your artists.
Week 5	9/18	Observed Rehearsal: Shaping your Kentucky scene – blocking 25% of class about 15 minutes each
	9/20	Observed Rehearsal: Shaping your Kentucky scene – blocking 25% of class about 15 minutes each
Week 6	9/25	Observed Rehearsal: Shaping your Kentucky scene – blocking 25% of class about 15 minutes each
	9/27	Observed Rehearsal: Shaping your Kentucky scene – blocking 25% of class about 15 minutes each
Week 7	10/2	Presentation of Kentucky Scene as Mid-Terms – 50% of class (Start thinking of your Vision Play – second scene)
	10/4	Presentation of Kentucky Scene as Mid-Terms – 50% of class
Week 8	10/9	Director’s Journal due by end of class as part of Mid-Terms, Confirm your Vision Play, Preparing for your Vision Presentation
	10/11	Director’s Journal returned at beginning of class; Preparing for your Vision Presentation: The World of the Play – Style and Performance
Week 9	10/16	Preparing for your Vision Presentation: Technical elements, Choose dates for your Vision Presentation and Observed class rehearsal
	10/18	Guest Artist #1 Discussion– A guest director or producer from an LA Theatre not already teaching at USC to introduce you to more of the professional world
Week 10	10/23	Preparing for your vision presentation: The other elements that may inform your vision – budget, marketing, available talent, rehearsal time, space
	10/25	Guest Artists #2 Discussion – A guest designer or artistic director from an LA theatre not already teaching at USC to introduce you more to the professional world.
Week 11	10/30	Vision Play Presentations and discussion (33% of class at 10 minutes each)
	11/1	Vision Play Presentations and discussion (33% of class at 10 minutes each)
Week 12	11/6	Vision Play Presentations and discussion (33% of class at 10 minutes each)
	11/8	Observed Rehearsal: Second scene – your Vision Play (blocking and acting – 25% of class at about 15 minutes)
Week 14	11/13	Observed Rehearsal: Second scene – your Vision Play (blocking and acting – 25% of class at about 15 minutes)
	11/15	Observed Rehearsal: Second scene – your Vision Play (blocking and acting – 25% of class at about 15 minutes)

Week 15	11/20	Observed Rehearsal: Second scene – your Vision Play (blocking and acting – 25% of class at about 15 minutes)
	11/22	Thanksgiving OFF
Week 16	11/27	Semester Wrap Up: Questions, observations, troubleshooting
	11/29	Final Presentation of Second Scenes (which continues on 12/11 at 11:00am)
Final	12/11	11:00AM – 1:00PM PED 207 Final Presentation of Second Scenes continue and conclude) Director’s Journal due at end of presentations from everyone with their observation comments of each classmates scenes.

\* This weekly breakdown is subject to change based on the needs and requirement of the class.

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### 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/departments/departments-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, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other 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>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](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.

# # # (as of 8-12-18)