

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 305: Directing – 63024
TERM: Spring 2019
DAY/TIME: Tuesday/Thursday , 8 – 9:50 pm
LOCATION: PED 208
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 1-2 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 one scene.
6. Conduct a minimum of two rehearsals per week outside of class time for all scenes.
7. Submit the following written documentation for each of the above mentioned scenes:
 - a) Director presentation material
- due after your presentation
 - b) Director prompt book, complete sections per PDF guidelines
- 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. Act fellow director's scenes for you will receive extra credit of 3 points per scene

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
Director presentation Image Scene:	5 points
Scene Presentation “Image Scene” Mid Term :	20 points
Director Final Scene:	20 points
Written prompt books, completed per guideline (two graded at 10 points each):	20 points
Class participation and collaboration:	15 points
TOTAL	100 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 = 96-100 points

A- = 91-95 points

B+ = 88-90 points

B = 85-87 points

B- = 81-84 points

C+ = 78-80 points

C = 75-77 points

C- = 71-74 points

D+ = 68-70 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 Ensemble **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 assignments 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 actor (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 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 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.

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!*

PROPOSED SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

Week #1

Tuesday 1/8/19: Introduction. Course outline and expectations. (Incl. Shaw Discussion Points)
Discuss “Image Scene” homework/ Directors Prompt Book. Discuss casting and outside rehearsals.

HOMework DUE THURSDAY 1/10/19:

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)

Thursday 1/10/19: 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 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 and Previous PDF Readings Above

Week #2

Tuesday 1/15/19 – Discuss reading assignments.

Discuss / read through director prompt book guidelines

Address questions about Image Scene and Director Presentation.

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

Thursday 1/17/19 -

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

HOMEWORK DUE THURSDAY 1/17:

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

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

Begin casting ideas / approach actors for casting in Image scene

Week #3

Tuesday 1/22/19

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

Discuss Weekend reading

Casting

Thursday 1/24/19

Casting complete for image scene, present casting

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

Discuss “Stages of Rehearsal”

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Read *A Sense of Direction* Pages 44-92

Read *Notes on Directing* Pages 23 – 67

Continue work on Image Scene Director Prompt Book

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)

NOTE: For Upcoming In-Class Rehearsals 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)

Week #4

Tuesday 1/29/19

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Table Work / Blocking Rehearsals
3 Scenes @ 25 min each

Week #4 (Continued)

Thursday 1/31/19

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Table Work / Blocking Rehearsals
3 Scenes @ 25 min each

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Continue work on Image Scene Director Prompt Book

Image Scene Rehearsals

Begin to Read these four plays to find a scene choice: “Really Really”, “Kill Floor”, “When We Were Young and Unafraid” , “Angels in America – Millennium Approaches”

Week #5

Tuesday 2/5/19

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Stop / Start
3 Scenes @ 25 min each

Thursday 2/7/19

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Stop / Start
3 Scenes @ 25 min each

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Continue work on Image Scene Director Prompt Book

Image Scene Rehearsals

Begin to Read these four plays to find a scene choice: “Really Really”, “Kill Floor”, “When We Were Young and Unafraid” , “Angels in America – Millennium Approaches”

Week #6

Tuesday 2/12/19

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Fine Tune
3 Scenes @ 25 min each

Thursday 2/14/19

In Class Rehearsals: Image Scene
Fine Tune

3 Scenes @ 25 min each

WEEKEND HOMEWORK:

Continue work on Image Scene Director Prompt Book

Read and **Choose a scene to work on** from either “Really Really”, “Kill Floor”, “When We Were Young and Unafraid”, “Angels in America – Millennium Approaches”

SUBMIT SCENE CHOICE AND CAST

Week #7 -----NEW SCENE CHOICE AND CAST DUE

Tuesday 2/19/19

PRESENT 5 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

Thursday 2/21/19

PRESENT 5 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 Play *More than once* for scene you have chosen

Read *A Sense of Direction* Pages 93-124

Read *Notes on Directing* Pages 69-102

Week #8

Tuesday 2/26/19

PRESENT 5 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

Thursday 2/28/19

PRESENT 5 Image 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

Homework: Play Scene #1 Prompt Book, Rehearse,

Week #9

Tuesday 3/5/19

Discuss Weekend reading

Group 4 Prompt Books Due (**Graded**)

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene #1 (**Graded**)

Table Work

2 Scenes

Thursday 3/7/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene #1 **(Graded)**

Table work or Blocking

2 Scenes

Week #10 – (3/11-3/14/19)

SPRING BREAK

Week #11

Tuesday 3/19/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 **(Graded)**

Blocking or Stop Start

3 Scenes

Thursday 3/21/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 **(Graded)**

Blocking or Stop Start

3 Scenes

Homework: Prompt Book, Rehearse

Week #12

Tuesday 3/26/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 **(Graded)**

Stop Start Rehearsals or Fine Tune

3 Scenes

Thursday 3/28/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 **(Graded)**

Stop Start Rehearsals or Fine Tune

3 Scenes

Homework: Prompt Book, Rehearse

Week #13

Tuesday 4/2/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 **(Graded)**

Stop Start Rehearsals or Fine Tune

3 Scenes

Thursday 4/4/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 (**Graded**)

Fine Tune

3 Scenes

Week # 14

Tuesday 4/9/19

In Class Rehearsal Play Scene # 1 (**Graded**)

Fine Tune

3 Scenes

Thursday 4/11/19

Group 1 - PRESENT 4 SCENES: Play Scene # 1 (**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,

Week #15

Tuesday 4/16/19

Group 2 - PRESENT 4 SCENES Play Scene # 1 (**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

Thursday 4/18/19

Group 3 - PRESENT 4 SCENES: Play Scene # 1 (**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

Week #16

Tuesday 4/23/19

Group 4 - PRESENT 4 SCENES Play Scene # 1 (**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

Thursday 4/25/19 (Last Class)

Group 5 - PRESENT 4 SCENES Play Scene # 1 (**Graded**)

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

Group 4 Prompt Books Due (**Graded**)

Group 5 Prompt Books Due BEFORE FINAL

FINAL: Wednesday May 8, 8-10 am

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

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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>.

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 for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

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. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu