



SDA #305A Directing

Spring 2023 – Mondays and Wednesdays– 8 until 9:50a.m.

Location: PED 208

Instructor: Stephanie Shroyer

Office: MCC 204

Office Hours: Tues and Thurs. 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. in MCC or by appointment please. Students are encouraged to use this as an opportunity to speak privately with the instructor about individual in-class progress

Contact Info: shroyer@usc.edu

Course Description

Examination of basic directorial principles: Pre-production analysis, casting, rehearsal procedures; relationship of the director to actor; integration of technical aspects of production. Course focus will emphasize developing strength and confidence in the areas of communication and collaboration.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course the student will have:

- Researched, cast, rehearsed and completed in class presentations, excerpts from two theatrical texts.
- Gained practical experience in the role of director through classroom exercises and in the presentation of scene-work (from published plays).
- Assembled a notebook of process and procedures employed by stage directors.
- Compiled and presented two books that document and support the director's artistic choices and processes used in the actualizing and presentation of scene-work.

Learning Aspirations

- To acquire a basic understanding of the skills and procedures required of a stage director to mount a theatrical production.
- To encourage the cultivation of the leadership skills necessary in the creation of an ensemble brought together for the purpose of play production.
- To embrace the role of the director as a collaborative individual, able to articulate and shape vision while embracing the creativity of the design team and actors.
- To gain practical experience in the role of director through classroom exercises and in the presentation of scene-work directed by the student.

Prerequisite(s): N/A

Co-Requisite (s): N/A

Concurrent Enrollment: N/A

Recommended Preparation: THTR 101, THTR 125, THTR 130 or 131

Course Notes, Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Textbooks: (all are available at the USC Bookstore or online)

- *A Sense of Direction*, by William Ball (req.)
- *Key Exchange* by Kevin Wade (req.) available on Amazon, USC Libraries (Leavy) or Scribd
- *The Person I Once Was* by Cindy Lou Johnson (req.) available USC Libraries
https://uosc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01USC_INST/273cgt/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_1929315759
- *Steal Like An Artist* by Austin Kleon (req.)
- *A text of your choice* for your vision play. (req.)
- *Notes on Directing: 130 Lessons in Leadership from the Director's Chair* by Frank Hauser (rec.)

Materials:

- A notebook (to serve as your Directors Book) is required. It needs to have the ability to hold inserts and handouts that will be accumulated across the semester. This will be handed in at your midterm and final showings of scenes.
- Students are responsible for providing necessary props, costumes, and set pieces for scene work. Lack of preparation in this area will seriously weaken your grade.
- The syllabus is posted on Blackboard. Necessary day to day updates and communications will be done via USC email.

Assignments and Classwork

A. Project One

- In Class Observed Rehearsals.** Having selected one of the two plays; cast it, rehearse it, and be prepared to share an excerpt in class. Due: February 22nd, 27th, and March 1st. Assessment: Formative only. Observed rehearsals are where the student director and their actors are working in class so that the encounter can be viewed by instructor and peers.
 - Short feedback/question session follows.
 - All costumes, props, set pieces are required as described in the text.
- Midterm. Presentation of First Scene.** Due: March 6th & 8th Assessment: Summative (20 points) based on attention to formative feedback from the observed rehearsal.
- Director's Book #1** Due: March 6th & 8th Assessment: Summative (10 points) In addition to all class notes, observation responses to class exercises, your Directors Book includes (for both midterm and final projects) the following components:
 - Class Notes (Include Peer Notes from observed rehearsals)
 - Vision Cornerstones
 - Director's journaling of your rehearsals and process.
 - Reference and research pertinent to the play.
 - Ground plan/environment sketches.
 - Your character descriptions and prop lists.
 - Director's rehearsal script with margin notes and beat breakdown.

- viii. A 2-3-page typed summary discussion of your directing experience and development of a process.
- ix. 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, Notes on Directing, Steal Like An Artist and pertinent classroom discussions documented in your notebook.

B. Project Two

- a. **Vision Presentations.** Having found a play of your choosing and greenlighted by the instructor; develop a director's vision. Due: March 27th, 29th Assessment: Formative only. Following the Cornerstones of Success from William Ball's A Sense of Direction, research, compile a Director's Vision Presentation to be presented in class that articulates your concept/approach/vision for a production of a play of your choosing.
 - i. Use of Visuals, Power Points, Audio Files is encouraged.
 - ii. Length of presentation is 5 min. in length. Five-minute feedback/discussion session follows.
 - iii. Peer Observation Notes begin and carry on for the remainder of the semester's work. (These are turned in at the Final, May. 8th)
- b. **Environment Set-up Lab** for vision play Due: April 3rd, 5th
 - i. Assessment: Formative Only. Group work, peer feedback and instructor interaction/feedback modalities.
- c. **Observed Rehearsals** Due: April 10th, 12th, 17th, 19th. Assessment: Formative only. Observed rehearsals average 20-25 min. where the student director and their actors are working in class so that the encounter can be viewed by instructor and peers.
 - i. Emphasize usage of space and vision elements.
 - ii. Short feedback/question session follows.
 - iii. All costumes, props, set pieces are required.
- d. **Presentations** Present an excerpt of the play. Due: April 26th, and May 8th. Assessment: Summative (25 pts)
- e. **Director's Book #2** Due: April 26th, and May 8th. Assessment: Summative (10 pts) Include the following components:
 - i. Class Notes (Include notes from peer's vision presentations, observed rehearsals, final shares)
 - ii. Vision Cornerstones
 - iii. Director's journaling of your rehearsals and process.
 - iv. Reference materials and research pertinent to your Vision play/playwright.
 - v. Ground plan/environment sketches.
 - vi. Prop lists.

- vii. Character descriptions, levels of objectives and relative obstacles (Universal, Super and Scene)
- viii. Director's rehearsal script with margin notes (beat objectives, actions and director beat markings)
- ix. A two-to-three-page typed summary discussion of your directing experience and development of a process.
- x. 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 reference your trajectory from the first project and include ideas/projections as to how you would fine-tune the process going forward. Make use of references from A Sense of Direction, Notes on Directing, Steal Like An Artist and pertinent classroom discussions documented in your notebook.

C. Peer Notes

Observe and assess your colleague's work. Write your reflections of the exercises including aspects of Vision, Environmental and Presentation

Due: May 8th. Assessment: Summative (5 points)

D. Classwork

Students will be assessed upon their active participation in class including contributions to class discussions, exercises and active listening throughout the semester.

Summative (30 points)

Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

100 possible points. All points are awarded and based on prompt and effective completion of the stated requirements. The best experience in 305A relies on the following:

- Active contribution to research and discussion during tablework.
- Constructive feedback of classmates' acting scene shares.
- Willingness to experiment and apply instructor and/or peer feedback during scene shares and classroom exercises.
- Prompt completion of all assignments and meeting due dates for written and/or performance work.
- Memorization of text.
- Availability to rehearse outside of class. (For context: for each unit of in-class contact time, the university expects two hours of out of class student work per week over a semester.)
- Observed rehearsals are graded in concert with grading of classwork.
- Scenes are graded based on clear evidence of preparedness (all props, costumes, set evidenced) and fulfillment of your directors' vision, as articulated in your Director's Book journal.

I look to see that what is on the page has found its way onto the stage!

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
Classwork	30	30%
Project One	20	20%
Directors Book #1	10	10%
Project Two	25	25%
Directors Book #2	10	10%
Peer Notes	5	5%
TOTAL	100	100%

Levels of achievement are defined as follows:

Excellent: evidence of clear understanding of class concepts coupled with original and creative insight and confident preparation

Good: an understanding of class concepts is evidenced with competence

Satisfactory: a general understanding of class concepts but definable gaps are in evidence

Poor: definable gaps in class concepts and lack of preparation are in evidence.

Unsatisfactory: absence of preparation, work not completed on time and no communication with professor and student partners.

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 -0

Assignment Submission Policy and Grading Timeline

- Assignments due as described above.
- All paper-work submissions must be compiled into portfolio form and turned in to me electronically through Blackboard, your 305A Google Folder or USC email. Note that I will have “spot observed” your Director’s Book during class time throughout the semester.
- Once submitted, please look for email confirmation from me that I can access your submissions. If there is a problem with the digital submission, I will contact you and we will trouble-shoot to complete successful transfer of your materials.
- Instructor and peer feedback for in class exercises and scene work is regular practice in our class sessions.
- Students can receive written feedback for all performance assignments immediately if the student wishes to capture electronically my handwritten notes.
- Formalized grading of performance and written work can be expected within 3 class sessions from the due date.

Additional Policies

Attendance:

- This is a *process-oriented* class. Attendance is imperative. Class exercises and discussions are experiential in nature and “make-up” work is not possible. Scheduled observed rehearsals that are missed will not be rescheduled.
- There are no excused absences. Three tardy episodes constitute one absence.

Time Requirements:

- Rehearsals outside of scheduled class time are required for a successful outcome in 305a. Note...Scenes need often be cast with students outside of this section’s enrollment. You may not act in your own directing scene.
- Logistical prowess in terms of time management for self and others is required.
- Students are responsible for providing necessary props, costumes, and set pieces for scene work. Lack of preparation in this area will seriously weaken your grade.
- Each student will maintain a **Director’s Book** containing; classroom notes, observations, comments upon viewing other students in class rehearsals (peer notes) and scene presentations and documentation of your directing process as described above in “Assignments”. This may be checked and referenced during observed rehearsals and is turned in to me in two increments: Directors Book for first play at midterm and for second/vision play at final periods. *See “Hint” below*
- Peer Observation Notes from in class exercises, observed rehearsals and presentations.

Health and Participation in Class

- There is no online attendance, observation, participation option for this class. All classes are held in person, on ground in PED 208. Classes will not be recorded for future viewing and there is no zoom option for 305A.
- While being mindful of the importance of being in class, our hope is that if you are feeling ill, you will use your best judgement as to whether you need to be absent.
- We will ensure that you have opportunity to access lecture notes (should there be any) or schedule office hours so that you can remain current in content covered during your absence but know that there is no way to reconstruct missed sessions in totality.
- 305A is a highly participatory, experiential, activity-based class. It requires extensive group exercises, large and small group discussion, outside rehearsal and peer observation/feedback of in-class presentations. If I, as your instructor, or you find your health presents a consistent interruption in your engagement with the above we will meet to decide best way forward under the circumstances.
- The University, as of this writing, states masks are highly recommended in the classroom but not required. We will follow University health protocols as adjusted throughout the semester.

Classroom Rules:

- Class exercises and discussions are experiential in nature and “make-up” work is not possible. Scheduled observed rehearsals that are missed will not be rescheduled.

- Late work will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor and then will be docked no less than 2-points per day past due.
- To give yourself the most positive experience in 305A; be punctual, prepared, and responsible, as other students are depending on you. Remember, you are the *Director*.
- Acting in a classmates 305a scene is encouraged and will count as 1-point of extra credit toward your final grade. If this occurs in another section of 305A, please bring documentation of participation. A maximum of 2-extra credit points is possible per semester.
- Scheduling rehearsal space should be done according to the SDA scheduling protocol.
- Check your USC email regularly. Scheduling changes and other timely information will be sent via email.
- Cell phones are to be turned off for the duration of class.
- Electronic capture of any portion of class is strictly prohibited without prior written approval of the instructor. When granted the files are to be used only for the purpose of educating that specific student, and may not be distributed or shared for any purpose whatsoever.

Hint about the Written Work of a Director (Your Class Notebook/Directors Book/Peer Observation Notes)

- Be diligent about documenting your curiosities.
- Don't put off jotting down thoughts!! An idea may seem so vivid at the time it occurs to you, but you'll find sitting down to write 24 hours (or 8 weeks...yikes!) after you had an idea or thought is a sure way to lose it.
- Don't know what to write about in your entries? Write about what you observe in the work of others.
- How effective is the work in final sharing? Is what they set forth to accomplish evidenced? Why or why not?
- Watching and then analyzing the result of other processes is a sure way to clarify your own.

Note on Staging/Out of Class Rehearsals

- No actual weapons can be used in scenes, and if you intend to use a prop weapon, please discuss this with me. In addition, if your choice of material includes the need for intimacy then coordination, please discuss with me.
- Since our directing class is occurring while we must still be "COVID Conscious" please take all COVID precautions listed in the Trojan Health App when you gather to rehearse. We all want you to be safe and healthy so we can remain in person!

Process and Progression

Week 1	1/9	Introduction. Course outline.
	1/11	Discussion: the role of the director. Assignment: Read <u>Key Exchange</u> and <u>The Person I Once Was</u> by Jan. 18 th .
Week 2	1/16	Martin Luther King Day. University holiday.

	1/18	Getting Started... Where do I begin?! Play Analysis. Initial instinct. The Cornerstones for Success. Have read; <u>A Sense of Direction</u> pages 3 through 44. Assignment: Answer questions for Directors Play analysis for <u>Key Exchange</u> and <u>The Person I Once Was</u> .
Week 3	1/23	Auditioning. Casting. Have read: <u>Sense of Direction</u> , pages 44 through 69.
	1/25	Casting cont.
Week 4	1/30	Creation of the ensemble. How do I talk to the actors? How do I encourage them to talk to each other? Have read: <u>Sense of Direction</u> , pages 70 through 92.
	2/1	Rehearsal. The journey of storytelling begins. Sense of place and time. Your rehearsal environment. Introduce beats/objectives. Have read: <u>Sense of Direction</u> , pages 93-124.
Week 5	2/6 & 8	Continue work on objectives. Composition and Picturization. Directorial shaping of the scene. Stages in rehearsal progression. ** Note: Begin search for second (vision play) project. **
Week 6	2/13	Physicalizing of Action in "Blocking". Secondary activity and physical action that supports story and character objectives.
	2/15	Continue Physicalizing of Action in "Blocking". Movement Patterning.
Week 7	2/20	Presidents Day. University Holiday.
	2/22	Observed Rehearsals (<u>Key Exchange</u> & <u>The Person I Once Was</u>). Search for, and chose, second project (Vision play).
Week 8	2/27 & 3/1	Observed rehearsals. Script for Vision play green-lighted by instructor.
Week 9	3/6 & 3/8	Midterm share. Presentation of <u>Key Exchange</u> and <u>The Person I Once Was</u> scenes. Director's Book #1 Due.
** Spring Break March 12th –19th **		
Week 10	3/20 & 3/22	Director's Vision. World of the Play. Technical elements. Have read: <u>Sense of Direction</u> pages 125 to end of text.
Week 11	3/27 & 3/29	Vision Presentations
Week 12	4/3 & 4/5	Presentation of Vision play environment set-up and use of playing areas. Group feedback/discussion.
Week 13	4/10 & 12	Observed Rehearsals. Attention to environment/place is imperative.
Week 14	4/17 & 19	Observed Rehearsals continued. Attention to environment/place is imperative.
Week 15	4/24	Semester Wrap-up. Class discussion of notes from first presentation of second scenes. Troubleshooting session for rehearsal questions.
	4/26	Begin final presentation of second scenes, Wed. April 26 th and cont. Mon., May 8 th 11:00a.m.- 1:00 p.m. (Director's Paper Packet #2 due at time of students' scene presentation).

Final Exam: Mon., May 8th 11:00 until 1:00p.m. Director's Book #2 due at final presentation of vision scene.

***** Reading assignments should be completed by the day listed. *****

***** Process and progression subject to change according to the needs and progress of the group *****

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs, and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

****The following statements and disclosures portion of this document are subject to SDA updates. Addendums will be posted on the Blackboard posting of this syllabus/contract****

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 Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (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.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent

when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

<https://osas.usc.edu>

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

****This syllabus serves as your contract for course 305A, Spring Semester 2023****