

USC School of Dramatic Arts

SDA #305B Directing

Spring 2023 – Mon. and Wed. – 10:00a.m. until 11:50a.m.

Location: PED 208

Instructor: Stephanie Shroyer

Office: MCC 204

Office Hours: Tues and Thurs. 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. 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

A continuation of the 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 conception of a director's vision as well as deepening strength and confidence in the areas of communication and collaboration in the production process.

Course Objectives

- 1) To develop a production concept for a full theatrical performance
- 2) To actualize said concepts through classroom exercises and in the presentation of scene-work from published plays
- 3) To research, compile and present a director's book that documents and supports the artistic choices and processes used to actualize the presentation of scene-work

Learning Aspirations

- 1) To deepen the basic understanding of skills and procedures required of a stage director to mount a theatrical production as introduced in 305A.
- 2) To identify, cultivate and individualize the leadership skills necessary in the creation of an ensemble.
- 3) To explore the role of the director as a collaborative individual, able to articulate and shape vision while embracing the playwrights' intent, creativity of the design team and performing artists/actors.
- 4) To explore and codify the director's obligation to an audience.

Prerequisite(s): 305A

Co-Requisite (s): N/A

Concurrent Enrollment: N/A

Recommended Preparation: Courses in Varied Creative Endeavors

Course Notes, Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required Texts:

- *A Sense of Direction*, William Ball
- *Play Directing*, Francis Hodge-Michael McClain
- *Notes on Directing, Lessons from a Director's Chair*, by Frank Hauser
- Script for your Vision Play
- *Steal Like An Artist*, by Austin Kleon (PDF available online)

Materials:

- A notebook
- Props, costumes and set pieces.

Assignments and Classwork

A. Admired Director Briefing: Assessment: Formative

- Briefing of a director you admire and why (can show a clip or images of their work if this helps make your point). This can be a theatre or film director whose work inspires you. Pick someone whose work you may emulate enough to study and find out how they “do what they do”. Due Wed. Jan 11th.

B. Vision Project: Assessment: Summative

- **Vision Play Selected and Greenlighted by Instructor:** Assessment: Formative
 - Choose a play that you will work on for the entirety of the semester. You will research the playwright, create a vision roadmap, cast, rehearse and present an excerpt of this as your culminating activity for 305B. Due Wed. Jan. 25th.
- **Vision Playwright Briefing:** Assessment: Formative
 - At the center collaboration is the playwright...our work begins with that artist. We will take this opportunity to know more of the playwrights (and their body of work) whose stories you are envisioning in 305b.
 - Talk to us about: Who influenced your playwright?
 - Prepare for a five-minute reading of your text exemplifying the playwright's use of language. Your classmates will be happy to be cast in the moment as the actors!
 - Due Jan. 30th, Feb. 1st, 6th, 8th
- **Vision Presentations.** Assessment: Formative
 - Comprised of the Cornerstones of Success.

- Be prepared to share based on “Guidelines for a Director’s Research” including general beauty, design concepts, logistics, character, scenic iconography and casting.
 - Vision project production teams coordinated.
 - Due Feb. 15th, 22rd
- **Observed Rehearsals.** Assessment: Formative
In Class Observed Rehearsals Assessment: Formative only. Observed rehearsals average 50 min. where the student director and their actors are working in class so that the encounter can be viewed by instructor and peers.
- Feedback/question/interactive session follows.
 - Costumes, props, set pieces included
 - Due: Weeks 10-14. Schedule TBD
- **Director’s Journal:** Assessment: Summative. While working on your Vision Play you will keep a notebook journaling the vision process. This notebook is due at the final scene showing. Due April 26th 10AM AND May 8th 8:00 AM
- Your journal for the vision project should have the following components:
- Class notes
 - Peer Notes
 - Play analysis
 - Vision/concept statement
 - A journaling of your rehearsals
 - Design guidance for World of Play
 - Your character descriptions & objectives
 - Ground plan/environment sketches and prop lists
 - Reference materials and research pertinent to your project
 - Director’s rehearsal script with margin notes and beat breakdowns
 - Any and all pertinent materials from your semester Director’s notebook
 - A summary discussion (see note below) of the directing experience and development of process. Consider how your work in the theatre might be affected after this experience in Directing 305b
- **Vision Project Final Share:** Assessment: Summative. Present a scene from your play, evidencing your Vision! April 26th 10AM AND May 8th 8:00 AM

C. Creative Expansion Discussions: Assessment: Summative. Throughout the first six weeks of the semester, survey creativity principles as outlined in a book

addressing such. (Consider either *Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step*, *Art and Reality* or *The Art Spirit* or *another book of your finding*). After selecting a topic inspired by one of the books, draft a question that challenges or defends a posit brought or found forward in your chosen text. Bring your question, to class and be prepared to facilitate a group discussion around your intrigue. **Due: Feb. 27th, March 1st, 6th, and 8th.**

- The director as collaborative theatre artist must above all else be able to consider multiple ways to view possibility in order to avoid rigidity in creative thinking. The purpose of this exercise is to:
 - a. Expand our notion of the creative process.
 - b. Facilitate provocative yet useful discussion ignited by your question. The challenge is to create a “room” where all have been heard and valued, and to move the group “forward” surrounding the notion. (Please consider that “forward” doesn’t necessarily mean agreement or resolution).

D. Peer Notes

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

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

E. Creative Expansion Reflection Paper: Assessment: Summative. After you’ve led your class discussions, take time to reflect, and then distill your thoughts into a paper addressing the following:

- Theorize value at conclusion of (and in the aftermath of) your discussion. Did the process of this discussion *expand* rather than *contract* creative thinking?
- Do you see creative value in the challenging of the idea as well as its embrace? How so or how not so?
- Articulate what have you learned about your group’s dynamic through this process.
- Finally, are you able to put into words a process for expanding *your* creativity? Feel free to embrace or reject the sourcebook that began this midterm adventure!

Due: Wed. March 8th.

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 305B relies on the following:

- Active contribution to research and discussion during classwork.
- 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.)
- In class rehearsals are graded in concert with grading of class-work.
- Scenes are graded based on clear evidence of preparedness and intended objective in each presentation effort (all props, costumes, set evidenced) and fulfillment of your directors' vision, as articulated in your Director's Book journal and in class presentations.

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.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Classwork & Obs Rehearsals	30	30%
Creative Expansion Discussion	20	20%
Creative Expansion Paper	10	10%
Vision Project	25	25%
Director's Journal	10	10%
Peer Notes	5	5%
TOTAL	100	100%

*** Two extra credit points can be achieved by acting in a classmate's scene. ***

Grading 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 305B 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.

Course Notes**Hint about the Written Work of a Director**

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 setting down to write 24 hours (or 8 weeks) after you had the idea is a sure way to lose it. Don’t know what to write about? Write about what you observe in the work of others. How effective is the work in final production? Watching, assessing the result of other processes is a sure way to clarify your own.

Staging

- No actual weapons can be used in scenes, and if you intend to use a prop weapon, please discuss this with me. Anything resembling an actual weapon must be cleared with Els Collins and the USC Dept. of Safety. In addition, if your choice of material includes the need for intimacy 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!

Note from the Instructor

Directing is a process that takes time to experiment with, absorb and understand. Do not become impatient. Remain positive and curious about the work. Remember the results are not instantaneous. Your commitment to the directing

process is of much greater importance than a definitive result. Each student works, learns and leads in a unique manner.

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.
- 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!

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 305B.
- 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.
- 305B 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.

- To give yourself the most positive experience in 305B; be punctual, prepared, and responsible, as other students are depending on you. Remember, you are the *Director*.
- Acting in a classmates 305B scene is encouraged and will count as 1-point of extra credit toward your final grade. If this occurs in another section of Directing (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.

Course Schedule

WEEK	ACTIVITY
1 - 3	Course Introduction. Steal Like An Artist (Admired Director Briefings). 305A Foundations Review (honing a shared vocabulary for 305B).
4 & 5	“Steal Like An Artist 2.0” The Playwright. At the center collaboration is the playwright...a director’s work begins here. We will take this opportunity to learn more about each of the playwrights (and their body of work) who wrote this semesters’ chosen vision plays.
6 & 7	Vision Presentations/Building Your Team
8 & 9	Creative Expansion Discussions: The creative advantage of viewpoint diversity in your rehearsal room.
10 - 14	Observed Rehearsals.
15	Semester Wrap-up. Activities TBD.

A Weekly Breakdown

Week 1	1/9	Introduction. Course outline. The role of the director. Begin Search for your Vision play. What is Director's Vision? For Wed. Briefing on a Director whose work you admire and why (can show a clip or images of their work if this helps make your point)
	1/11	Briefings of a director you admire. Have read: Article by Louis Jouvet, "The Profession of the Director"
Week 2	1/16	Martin Luther King Day. University Holiday.
	1/18	Complete director briefings. The Directors Toolbox and The Cornerstones of Success. Play analysis, World of Play, Given Circumstances and Dialogue, Dramatic Action, Character, Beats, Idea/Initial instinct, Objectives... <i>Vision!</i> Have read: Article by Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, "The Three Faces of the Director" & <i>A Sense of Direction</i> , pages 3 through 36. Vision Play Search check in.
Week 3	1/23	The Directors Toolbox Cont. Discuss a director's primary study of text.
	1/25	Artivism and Directors Vision. Where does responsibility lie? https://www.artandobject.com/articles/artivism-making-difference-through-art
		Vision Plays greenlighted.
Week 4	1/30&2/1	"Steal Like An Artist 2.0" The Playwright. Individual briefings.
Week 5	2/6&8	"Steal Like An Artist 2.0" The Playwright briefings cont.
Week 6	2/13	"Viewpoint Diversity as Creative Expansion" Guest Lecture by Matilda Schulman.
	2/15	Vision Presentations. Cornerstones of Success. Be prepared to share based on "Guidelines for a Director's Research." General Beauty/Design Concepts/Logistics/Character/Scenic Iconography/Casting. Vision project production teams coordinated.
Week 7	2/20	Presidents Day.
	2/22	Vision Presentations Completed. Vision project production teams coordinated. Have read: Articles by David Belasco, "Creating Atmosphere", Nikolai Okhlopkov, "Creative Interplay", Chapter 17 "Directing is Designing" Hodge McLain.
Week 8	2/27&3/1	Midterm. Creative Expansion Discussions

Week 9 3/6 **Midterm. Creative Expansion Discussions**
 3/8 **Midterm: Creative Expansion Discussions cont.**
Midterm: Creative Expansion paper due: Wed. 3/9

Spring Break March 12th – 19th

Week 10 3/20&22 Begin Observed Rehearsals. Table Reads. Have read pp. 154-163 in Hodge McLain. At your leisure peruse *A Sense of Direction*, pages 70 through 92 and Part II, “Communication”, and pp.57-154, Hodge McLain

Week 11 3/27&3/29 Observed Rehearsals Composition/Picturization

Week 12 4/3&4/5 Observed Rehearsals Composition/Picturization

Week 13 4/10&4/12 Observed Rehearsals First Showings Vision Project Scenes

Week 14 4/17&19 Observed Rehearsals First Showings Vision Project Scenes cont.

Week 15 4/24 Semester Wrap-up. Round table discussion and feedback from first presentation of vision scenes. Troubleshooting session for rehearsal questions. Directing as a Career.

Read: “Your Future as a Director” pp.373 Hodge McLain

4/26 Begin final presentation of second scenes, Wed. April 26th and cont. Mon., May 8th 8a.m.- 10p.m. (Director’s Paper Packet due at time of students’ scene presentation).

Final Exam: Final Presentation of *Vision Project* continues. *Directors Journal* and *Peer Notes* **Due:** Monday, May 8th 8:00-10:00a.m.

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

* Reading assignments should be completed by the day listed. Additional reading may be assigned as necessary.

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 (Video 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.symlicity.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 305B, Spring Semester 2023****