

Bergen Community College
Division of Business, Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Visual and Performing Arts

Course Syllabus

Directing for the Stage THR-215

Date of Most Recent Syllabus Revision: November 11, 2021
Course Typically Offered: Fall ___ Spring X Every Semester ___ Other ___
Syllabus last reviewed by: BCC General Education Committee _____
Curriculum Committee _____

Basic Information About Course and Instructor

Semester and Year:
Course and Section Number:
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:
Office Location:
Phone:
Departmental Secretary:
Office Hours:
Email Address:

Course Description

This course is designed to instruct students in the fundamentals of directing for the stage. Student directors will learn how to analyze a script, cast, block, and direct a one-act play

that will be presented in a performance for the public. This course explores various directing techniques that emphasize not only the artistic approach but also the practical and technical elements of the theatre. 2 lecture/2 lab hours. 3 credits.

Prerequisites: THR-101

Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of meeting the requirements of this course, students will be able to

1. Apply the fundamentals of directing (composition, picturization, movement, pace and focus) to the various types of theatrical spaces (proscenium, thrust, arena, etc.).
2. Analyze a script and develop a concept for a play by understanding the elements, conventions and dramatic forms of the theatre.
3. Coordinate the practical elements and technical requirements of play production: casting, blocking, scheduling, prompt book analysis.
4. Collaborate with designers and technical staff to present a successful theatrical performance.
5. Mount a production of a scene and a ten-minute one-act play for public presentation.

Means of Assessment:

In order to meet the Student Learning Outcomes above, various assessment types will be utilized. The major assessment types used in this course are graded class discussions, objective tests and examinations, an in-class presentation of scenes directed and a for public presentation of a directed one-act play, and 2 prompt books containing concept, blocking, research and ground plan for each of the presentations.

In support of the above-mentioned goals, the course will include reading, writing, listening, viewing and discussion assignments from the textbook and from outside sources (e.g., Handouts, DVDs, videos, internet). Students are strongly encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and writing assignments.

Outcomes will be assessed as follows:

1. Ability to break down scenes and discuss the events of the play through the application of a director's vocabulary.
2. An awareness of stage techniques for blocking a play, creating a prompt book, and articulating a concept for the play.
3. Ability to create a ground plan; placement of walls, doors, windows, furniture, etc.
4. Ability to cast a play by clearly articulating a complete character breakdown for each character in the play. Coordinate with other directors and understand their casting needs as well as develop a rehearsal schedule that is adaptable in order to create an ensemble of actors and directors.
5. Ability to critique their work by articulating the pros and cons of the process in a postmortem meeting following the final performance.

Course Content

Directing for the Stage – This course will introduce the student to the different methodologies used in directing for live theatre. Students will develop a keen awareness for space and its relationship to actors, scenery, props as well as the audience. With in-class exercises, a vocabulary will be built and an actualization of that vocabulary will be realized as the director's rehearse scenes and one-act plays for performance. Student directors will also develop a keener understanding of a playwright's intention by examining, in detail, the written word as well as the time and place the play was written. The director will then be able create their interpretation for that play and articulate their vision at concept meeting with their production team, their actors and, finally, to their audience as they view the performance.

2 lecture/2 lab hours. 3 credits.

Prerequisites: THR-131

Technological Literacy

Technological literacy is one expectation of this course. Students will be encouraged to use such technology as well as understand the technology used in the theater – lighting, sound, wireless communication.

Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

Required:

- Converse, Terry John. 1st Edition. **Directing for the Stage**. Meriwether Publishing LRD. Colorado Springs, CO.
- Gurney, A.R., **The Dining Room**. Dramatists Play Service, Inc., NY, NY. 1982

Recommended: Anthologies of One-Act Plays to be provided:

- **Laughing Lines: Short Comic Plays** edited by Eric Lane and Nina Shengold. 2007. Vintage Books
- **Take Ten: New 10-Minute Plays** edited by Eric Lane and Nina Shengold. 1997. Vintage Books.
2004 - The Best Ten-Minute Plays: 3 or More Actors Edited by Michael Bigelow Dixon and Liz Engelman. 2004. Smith and Kraus Book.
- **Take Ten II: New 10-Minute Plays** edited by Eric Lane and Nina Shengold. 2003. Vintage Books.
More Ten Minute Plays from Actors Theatre of Louisville. Edited by Michael Bigelow Dixon. 1992. Samuel French, Inc.
- **30 Ten-Minute Plays: 2 Actors**. Edited by Michael Bigelow Dixon, Amy Wegener & Karen C. Petruska. 2001. Smith Kraus Book.
- **30 Ten-Minute Plays: 3 Actors**. Edited by Michael Bigelow Dixon, Amy Wegener & Karen C. Petruska. 2001. Smith Kraus Book.
Ten 10-Minute Plays Volume 1. Edited by Walter Wykes. 2006. Black Box Press.
- **The Best American Short Plays 2000 – 2001**. Edited by Mark Glubke. 2002. Applause Theatre and Cinema Books.
- **25 Ten-Minute Plays from Actors Theatre of Louisville**. 1989. Samuel French, Inc.
The Best American Short Plays 1999 – 2000. Edited by Glenn Young. 2001. Applause Theatre and Cinema Books.

Grading Policy

The final grade in this course will be determined by a student's overall mastery of the subject matter as evidenced on exams, quizzes, oral presentations, homework assignments, consistent attendance and quality class participation. There will be one mid-term exam, one final exam, 2 final projects, and weekly assignments.

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| One fully staged scene and in-class performance | 20% |
| One fully staged one-act play and public performance | 30% |
| In-class projects, group exercises, prop lists, pre-blocking | 15% |
| Test on Terminology | 5% |
| 2 Prompt Books (2 @ 10%) | 20% |
| Class participation and postmortem evaluation | 10% |

Criteria for Evaluation: *Attendance and participation a.*
consistent attendance**

- b. passing test scores
- c. evidence of comprehension of material
- d. completed staging of scene and play
- e. quality written prompt book
- f. overall demonstration of comprehension of the course material

90-100 = A 86-89 = B+ 80-85 = B 76-79 = C+ 70 - 75 = C 65-69 = D
E =Unofficial Withdrawal W =Official Withdrawal INC=Incomplete 0-64 = F

Any work turned in late from the original due date shall be deducted by one letter grade. Two letter grades shall be deducted after the second week from the due date, and three letter grades after the third week from the original due date. There are no make-up examinations unless approved in advance by the instructor.

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Students will be evaluated on attendance and participation in class using the following criteria: consistent attendance; evidence of studying text and assignments; completed daily assignments; quality classroom responses.

Each class can potentially count towards the possible 10% score for attendance and participation. A letter grade totaling 10% of the final grade will be determined by the instructor based upon the aforementioned criteria.

Bergen Community College Academic Policies:

Bergen Community College is committed to academic integrity – the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception. Please review the college catalog or student handbook for further information on this topic.

Bergen Community College has adopted an internal grievance procedure to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by federal regulation implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. (ADA). Please review the college catalogue for further information on this topic.

Bergen Community College is committed to providing its students and employees with an academic and work environment free from sexual harassment or discrimination. Please review the policy prohibiting sexual harassment in the college catalog.

Please review the statement on acceptable use of BCC technology in the college catalog.

Faculty hold 3 office hours per week, and as requested by students, by appointment. Students are encouraged to seek out their faculty member for academic needs.

Student and Faculty Support Services

All students are encouraged to visit and use the BCC Library. There are particularly excellent electronic references in the area of theatre available to our students.

Students are encouraged to use the student support services of the college. These services include: the Writing Center, the music-computer Lab, the Tutorial Center, and the Office of Specialized Services.

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| The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses | Room C-334 | 201-612-5581 psimms@bergen.edu |
| Smarthinking Tutorial Service | On Line at: | www.bergen.edu/library/learning/tutor/smart/index.asp |
| The Tutoring Center | Room L-125 | 201-447-7908 |
| The Writing Center | Room L-125 | 201-447-7908 |
| The Online Writing Lab (OWL) | On Line at: | www.bergen.edu/owl |
| The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities) | Room L-115 | 201-612-5270 |
| The Sidney Silverman Library – Reference Desk | Room L-226 | 201-447-7436 |

Course Outline:

Note to Students: This Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class

| Week | Topic/Activity | Learning Objectives | Assignments/Events |
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| 1 | <p>Course Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shared experiences with directors ■ Introduction to preliminary “directing” vocabulary ■ Discussion of a prompt book ■ In class exercises in directing: “Exposure” | 1,2,3 | <p>Read Syllabus and class schedule</p> <p>For next class read “The Dining Room”</p> |
| 2 | <p>Script Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breaking down the scene: French scenes, beats, and the event of the play. | 2 | <p>Read Chapter 1 “The Silent Seven” Chapter 4 “Ground Plan Exercises”</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understanding preliminary ground plans with in-class project. ■ In class exercises in directing: “Stage Pictures” | 1,3 | Read Handout “Placement” |
| 3 | <p>Blocking Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exercises in blocking proscenium, thrust, arena ■ Exploring levels and the dynamics they create ■ In class exercises in directing: “Silent Tension” | 1,2,4 | <p>Read Chapter 2 “The Silent Seven”</p> <p>Read Handout –“Levels”</p> |
| 4 | <p>Understanding Casting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Techniques needed for casting a play – character breakdown ■ Discussion of the casting process – audition sheets, pictures and resumes, sides, callbacks. | 3 | <p>Read Chapter 3 “Justifying Movement”</p> <p>Read 3 One-Act plays & notate</p> |
| 5 | <p>Rehearsal Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ creating a rehearsal schedule ■ explore the process – first read thru, table work, blocking, technical rehearsals, previews and performances | 1,2,3,4,5 | <p>Read Chapter 5 “Open Scene Exercises”</p> <p>Read 3 One-Act plays & notate</p> |
| 6 | <p>AUDITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaborating with other directors – sharing actors, rehearsal spaces, furniture, props, etc. ■ Actual auditions for scenes | 2,3 | <p>Read handout “The audition”</p> <p>Read 3 One-Act plays & notate</p> |
| 7 | <p>REHEARSAL AND CRITIQUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Director’s bring their rehearsal to class – discuss where they are in the process, articulate what they will be looking to achieve at the rehearsal, and critique of the directors work thus far. | 1,2,3,4,5 | |
| 8 | <p>Mid Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation of scenes ■ Prompt Book Due | 1,2,3,4,5 | |

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| 9 | <p>Postmortem Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reflect on Mid-term; pros and cons of the director’s work ■ Evaluation of Prompt Book. | 1,2,3 | Read Chapter 6 “Closed Scene Exercises” |
| 10 | <p>Script Analysis for 10 Minute One-Act Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Choose 10 minute one-act play to direct ■ Breakdown of play from exposition to denouement. ■ Discuss ground plan needs ■ Exercise in class: “Working with a Ground Plan” | 2 3,4 | <p>Read Chapter 7: “Supporting Parts”</p> <p>Read Handout</p> |
| 11 | <p>One-Act Play AUDITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaborating with other directors – sharing actors, rehearsal spaces, furniture, props, etc. ■ Audition for one-act plays | 2,3 | Read Handout “Props, Furniture & Costumes Props” |
| 12 | <p>REHEARSAL AND CRITIQUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First half of directors bring their rehearsal to class – discuss where they are in the process, articulate what they will be looking to achieve at the rehearsal, rehearse and critique of the directors work thus far. | 1,2,3,4,5 | |
| 13 | <p>REHEARSAL AND CRITIQUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Second half of directors bring their rehearsal to class – discuss where they are in the process, articulate what they will be looking to achieve at the rehearsal, rehearse, and critique of the directors work thus far. | 1,2,3,4,5 | |
| 14 | <p>STUMBLE THRU, TECHNICAL REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 8 consecutive class meetings with full run thru of each one-act with evaluations ■ 2 nights of public performances ■ Prompt Book Due | 1,2,3,4,5 | |

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| 15 | STIKE AND POSTMORTEM <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Restoring the theatre, props, furniture, etc. returned..■ Review prompt book and critique the directing process and the performances. . | 1,2,3 | Read Handout “Evaluating your work” |
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