

MRTS 4810 DIRECTING NARRATIVE MEDIA Spring 2026

Meeting in Room RTFP 264, RTVFP Building, 1172 Union Circle, Denton Campus

Class meeting time: Monday 2pm-4:50pm

Prerequisite(s): MRTS major status and MRTS 3220 or 3230 or 3525.

Professor Eugene Martin

Office location: RTVF Building Rm. 265

Office Hours: Monday 1-2p.m. and by appointment during the week in person or on Zoom.

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### **Course Description:**

The instructor will guide students through a progression of the creative process of the film director. This will be achieved by exploring in detail the role of the narrative film and TV director. It will be examined and presented via a series of film screenings, acting exercises, directing exercises, and lectures. Students will direct two film projects in this class.

### **Course Objectives:**

Explain the art and craft of the film director; illustrate how a director works collaboratively to achieve his/her vision in storytelling; review the impact of digital tools and how they apply to directing actors; demonstrate ways to develop character and explore subtext; examine theories of acting and directing techniques.

### **Assignments:**

**First Project:** Students act and direct a short scene from a play provided by the instructor.

**Second Project:** Narrative directing project. Each student directs a three minute scene for single camera based on existing material. The scene is shot in either one of two ways – as a continuous long take **or** as an edited scene broken up into individual shots.

**Midterm Paper:** Five pages

**Final Project:** Each student directs a three to five minute narrative short film.

### **Required Textbook:**

[Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen](#)

## Communication Expectations:

The Professor will use the Canvas site for updates. Please use your UNT email account to contact the Professor. Please allow 24 hours for email responses Monday to Friday. Please refrain from using smartphones or laptops during class unless otherwise approved by an accommodation provided by ODA or the Dean of Students office.

## Evaluation:

Grading:

First Project, acting/directing	15 pts.
Second Assignment, short scene construction	20 pts.
Midterm, five page paper on Respect for Acting	30 pts.
Final Project, 5 min. creative project	35 pts.
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 pts.</b>

**Grading Criteria:** You must have excellent attendance and participation to receive an “A” in the class. All of your projects must be in the top tier of your peer group. Earning an “A” in the class also requires that you work collaboratively with your peers by helping them complete their projects successfully. 90-100 pts is an “A”.

A letter grade of “B” will show strong grades in your assigned projects and mid-term paper. It will also reflect a minimum level of effort on your part in terms of participation and collaborative efforts. 80-89 pts is a “B”.

A letter grade of “C” will show average grades across your projects and several missed classes due to unexcused absences. 70-79 is a “C”.

60-69 pts is a “D”.

0-59 pts is an “F”.

**PLEASE NOTE: Two unexcused absences will equal one whole letter grade drop.**

Late Assignments: For every week an assignment is late, **one letter grade** will be deducted from the final grade for that assignment. There will be no incompletes for this course.

## Spring 2026 Calendar:

Jan 12th

Introduction to the technique of screen acting. The actors' process. Screen short documentary *I Knew It Was You*. Review first group project assignment. Screen clip from *Manchester by the Sea* directed by Kenneth Lonergan. Shot analysis for the "top of the steps" scene with Casey Affleck and Michelle Williams

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 1,2,3*

Recommended readings:

[Article on Indie filmmaking, "Filmmaking is not a Job, It's a State of Mind" \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Jan 19th - MLK Holiday, no class session

Jan 26th - Camera and prime lenses workshop; blocking actors with the video monitor

Screening: *Scenes from Roma and La Ciudad*

Shot design and long takes

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 4,5*

Feb 2nd

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 6,7,8*

Present acting workshops in class. In class critiques.

Feb. 9th

Finish presenting acting workshops in class. The art of the short narrative film. Screen selection of short films by Lynn Ramsey and Andrea Arnold.

Screen [The Whale](#) by Jaime Chapin, UNT Advanced Short film.

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 9,10,11*

Feb 16th

Screen scenes from *Il Posto* by Ermanno Olmi and *Shadows* by John Cassavetes

[Recommended readings: Article on Il Posto by Kent Jones \(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)

[How Ermanno Olmi Found Grace in the Daily Labors of Italians - The New York Times \(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 12,13,14,15*

Feb 23rd

Screen Directing Conventions. Screening: clips from *Raging Bull* and *City of God*. Directing with editing in mind. How to direct “coverage” described in detail.

Recommended readings:

[Article from Cinema Humain about \*City of God\* \(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)

[Article about working with non-actors by the director Fernando Meirelles Links to an external site.](#)

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 16,17,18*

March 2nd

Topics to be covered: Working with a Casting Director and how to audition actors.

The micro budget feature film, a case study of *Colewell*, a film by Tom Quinn

Screen *Colewell* in class.

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 19,20,21*

March 9th - Spring break, no class session

March 16th

How to screen dailies and make adjustments while in production.

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 22*

March 23rd

Mid-term five page paper due.

Screen Project #2 in class.

March 30th

Finish screening Project #2 in class.

The Business of Directing: The business of directing. How making a film is like running a small company, hiring personnel, creating budgets, scheduling, and delivery of films.

Recommended readings:

[Article on the business side of filmmaking \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[The Film Collaborative on filmmaking as a business \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[The Directors Guild of America \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[Screen Actors Guild SAG/AFTRA \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[Writers Guild of America \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[Producers Guild of America \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 23*

April 6th

Advanced scene analysis techniques. Advanced rehearsal techniques.

The French method of production (Truffaut) vs. American methods of production (Altman and Scorsese). Lesson on “*cinematic time*”.

Screen: *site. On Kanopy*

Recommended readings/screenings:

[Interview with William Goldenberg who edited Argo and Zero Dark Thirty \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

[This recent compilation from the Directors' Guild of America is a wonderful review to screen as five directors talk about their work \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Required Readings: *Reading: Hagen Ch 24*

April 13th

Directing the edit and final delivery of your film for distribution. The role of the First A.D. and Second A.D. The DGA training program described. Film festival strategies and fundraising.

[Link to the DGA Training Program](#) [Links to an external site.](#) LA

[Link to the DGA Training Program](#) [Links to an external site.](#) NYC

April 20th

Pitch presentations for Final Projects

April 27th

Screen Final Projects, Fourteen films to be screened