



DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA ARTS
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Course Syllabus MRTS 4810/5702 DIRECTING NARRATIVE MEDIA Fall 2021

Meeting in Room RTFP 264, RTVFP Building, 1172 Union Circle, Denton Campus
Class meeting time: Mondays, 2-4:50pm

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

Associate Professor Eugene Martin

Office location: RTVF Building Rm. 272A tel: 940-565-2537

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 1-2 p.m. and by appointment during the week

Email: Eugene.martin@unt.edu

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 director. It will be examined and presented via a series of film screenings, acting workshops with student acting majors in the Department of Dance and Theatre, directing exercises, and lectures. Students will direct three 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: Direct a short scene from a play taking a turn as director (once) and actor (twice).

Second Project: Narrative directing project. Each student directs a three to five-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 Acting Analysis paper: 3 pages for MRTS 4810, 6 pages for MRTS 5702

Final Project: Each student directs a three to five minute narrative short film for his/her/their final project.

Required Textbook:

Becoming an Actor's Director: Directing Actors for Film and Television, by Reggie Life
1st edition, Focal Press ISBN 978-0367191900

Additional recommended readings and resources located on the Canvas site as well as links on this syllabus.

Communication Expectations:

The Professor will use the Canvas site for updates, so make sure to check Canvas weekly. Please use your UNT email account to contact the Professor. As your Professor, I try to respond to all email on the same day from Monday to Friday up to 5pm.

Evaluation:

Grading:

First Project, acting/directing	15 pts.
Second Assignment, short scene construction	25 pts.
Final Project, 5 min. creative project	35 pts.
Midterm, Scene Analysis 3-page paper	15 pts.
Participation/attendance:	10 pts.

Total **100 pts.**

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. Grades will be uploaded during the semester onto the Canvas site.

Equipment and Editing Systems:

See Media Arts labs for editing and equipment room hours. Students must supply their own *headphones* for use during shooting and in the editing facility. Please note that the lab/equipment room will not be open for use during the Thanksgiving Break. Any overnight checkouts of location equipment must be coordinated 24 hours in advance and is by permission of the instructor. We will be using the Ursa Black Magic cameras for the class; the use of the Varicam LT is also an option for the final projects.

You are financially and legally responsible for any equipment you check out from either Department. A copy of the Department of Media Arts policy on the loss of checkout privileges for late equipment return is available for you to review.

Safety: This course may involve potentially hazardous activities, the nature of which include working with and exposure to electronically powered equipment. Accordingly, the Department of Media Arts has slated this course within Category 2 (courses in which students are exposed to some significant hazards but are not likely to suffer bodily harm.)

Fall 2021 Calendar:

Aug 23rd

Introduction to the technique of screen acting. The actors' process.

Screen short documentary *I Knew It Was You*. Review first group project assignment.

Screen acting auditions for practice.

Recommended readings:

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

Aug. 30th

Mini Ursa camera and prime lenses workshop; blocking actors with the video monitor

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 1, 2 and 3

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

Sept. 6th – **No class, Labor Day Holiday**

Work on first acting/directing project outside of class

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 4 and 5

Screening: [Daughters of the Dust](#)

Recommended readings:

[Director Julie Dash on Daughters of the Dust, Beyoncé, and Why We Need Film Now More Than Ever Vogue.pdf](#)

[How 'Daughters of the Dust' Sent Ripples Through the Film World - The New York Times.pdf](#)

[The Return of Julie Dash's Historic "Daughters of the Dust" The New Yorker.pdf](#)

Sept. 13th

Present acting workshops in class. In class critiques.

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 6 and 7

Sept. 20th

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.

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 8 and 9

Screening on Kanopy – [Il Posto](#)

Recommended readings:

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

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

Sept. 27th

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

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 10 and 11

Recommended readings:

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

[Article about working with non-actors by the director Fernando Meirelles](#)

Oct. 4th

Screen first narrative projects.

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

How to screen dailies and make adjustments while in production.

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 12,13, and 14

Oct. 11th

Screen narrative feature film for Scene Analysis paper, [Close Up](#) on Kanopy

Readings due: Regge Life: Chapters 15 and 16

Suggested readings:

[POV Magazine on the Hybrid Films of Abbas Kiarostami](#)

[Hammer to Nail review/essay on Close Up](#)

Oct. 18nd

Mid-term 3-page Scene Analysis paper due.

Oct. 25th

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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

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

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

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

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

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

Nov. 1st

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: [Rashomon](#) on Kanopy

Recommended readings/screenings:

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

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

Nov. 8th

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](#) LA

[Link to the DGA Training Program](#) NYC

Nov. 15th

Working with producers, developing and adapting material for the screen.

Screen [Fences](#) on Swank

Recommended readings/podcast:

Here is a piece about [Fences and several other films that were originally plays from the LA Times \(Links to an external site.\)](#):

[And here is 15 minute podcast with Denzel and Viola about their work on the film.](#)

Nov. 22nd – Screen dailies for final projects; edit session meetings with the Professor

Nov. 29th – Screen Final projects.

The last day of class is the due date for the final films.

MRTS 5702 Graduate section addendum

Required Texts:

Life, Regge, *Becoming an Actor's Director*, Routledge Press and Hagen, Uta, *Respect for Acting 2nd edition*

Evaluation:

12 Weekly Essays on 26 book chapters from <i>Respect for Acting</i>	120 points
Look Book Assignment	40 points
Directing a scene from a play	15 points
Three-minute film adapted from a film or play	25 points
Mid-term 6 page paper	30 points
Final Short Film and 3 page reflection paper	70 points
Total	300 points

The weekly readings and assignments are in addition to the scheduled assignments for the MRTS 4810 sections.

Week 1 Introduction to the technique of screen acting. The actors' process.

Reading: Life, Ch. 1, *What is Directing and the Prose of Preparation*; Hagen Ch 1,2,3

Week 2 *Readings:* Life, Ch. 2 *The Bridge to the Three Questions of Choice*; Hagen Ch 4,5,6

Week

Reading: Life, Ch. 3, *The Three questions to Choice: Walking in the Actors Shoes*; Hagen Ch 7,8,9

Week 4

Reading: Life, Ch 4, The Five Tools: Bringing the Ensemble Together – Part 1; Hagen Ch 10,11,12

Week 5

Reading: Life, Ch 5, The Five Tools: Bringing the Ensemble Together – Part 2; Hagen Ch 13,14

Week 6

Reading: Life, Ch 6, Moments and Beats; Hagen Ch 15,16,17

Week 7

Reading: Life, Ch 7, Marking Your Script; Hagen 18,19
Look Book Assignment due

Week 8 Screen narrative feature film for Scene Analysis paper. *Closeup* by Abbas Kiarostami

Reading: Life, Ch 8, The Improvised Monologue; Hagen Ch 20,21

Week 9 Mid-term 6-page Scene Analysis paper due.

Reading: Life, Ch 9, The Scripted Monologue; Hagen Ch 22

Week 10 *Reading: Life, Ch 11, Scene Work: Conducting the Full Rehearsal; Hagen Ch 23*

Week 11 The Business of Directing *Reading: Life, Ch 12, Previsualization*

Week 12 *Reading: Life, Ch 13, Digital Capture: Putting it Inside the Frame; Hagen Ch 24*

Week 13 *Reading: Life, Ch 14, Responding to scene work; Hagen Ch 25*

Week 14 Work day for final projects

Week 15 *Reading: Life, Ch 15, Building your Sixth Sense: Breaking out of your comfort zone; Hagen Ch 26, 27*

UNT POLICIES

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an "F" in the course and possible further sanctions at the university level.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the [UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form](#)

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being: · Student Health and Wellness Center (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>) · Counseling and Testing Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>) · UNT Care Team (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>) · UNT Psychiatric Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>) · Individual Counseling (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling> ([Links to an external site.](#)))

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT. · [UNT Records](#) · [UNT ID Card](#) · [UNT Email Address](#) · [Legal Name](#)

*UNT eulDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns. You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage: o What are pronouns and why are they important? o How do I use pronouns? o How do I share my

pronouns? o How do I ask for another person’s pronouns? o How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?

Additional Student Support Services · Registrar (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>) · Financial Aid (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>) · Student Legal Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>) · Career Center (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>) · Multicultural Center (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>) · Counseling and Testing Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>) · Pride Alliance (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>) · UNT Food Pantry (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry> (Links to an external site.))

Academic Support Services

- Academic Resource Center (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources> (Links to an external site.))
- Academic Success Center (<https://success.unt.edu/asc> (Links to an external site.))
- UNT Libraries (<https://library.unt.edu/> (Links to an external site.))
- Writing Lab (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)