

# Directing I: The Development of Visual Perception

## THEA 3100.001/3100.301 (Lab) Spring 2020

Instructor: **Lisa Devine, MFA**

Office Phone Number: In Emergencies Leave a Message at: (940) 565-2211

Email Address: [lisa.devine@unt.edu](mailto:lisa.devine@unt.edu) (OR until activated: [Ldevine2002@yahoo.com](mailto:Ldevine2002@yahoo.com))

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Class Time: MW 2:00-4:20

Office: RTFP 215

### Prerequisites

Courses: Completion of *Play Analysis*, *Acting Fundamentals*, *Acting Realism*, *Theatre History* with a C or better final grade. Skills Needed:

1. Ability to analyze text.
2. Knowledge of American Realism acting terms.
3. Familiarity with actor coaching techniques.
4. Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
5. Good group organizational skills.

### Course Description

Directing I is addressed to those interested in learning to direct for the theatre whether community, academic, regional or Broadway theater. We will explore the art of storytelling, by first asking, "What is the story" and then deciphering "What are the pictures and staging that will compliment the text". Directing will be studied as both a craft and an interpretive art. We will study the basic techniques of stage directing: interpretation, staging, and actor-coaching. We will analyze scenes in context of the play and explore how that scene manifests itself onstage. This course will exercise the emerging director's ability to think and create by developing the powers of observation.

*\*\*\*Because you (and only you) know what you'd like to gain from this class, I encourage you to set a few goals to accomplish over the course of the semester. Please let me know what I can do to assist you as you achieve these goals.*

### Attendance

**Active Participation is an extremely important part of maintaining a good grade in this class. You must attend all scheduled class sessions.** Each has been designed for the needs and goals of this group. If you are absent, you have missed experiences that cannot be made up or even explained. Information is imparted during lecture, discussion, activities and exercises that discussing with me or other students will not fill the gap of your absence.

#### Acceptable Student Behavior

- It is expected that you give your **undivided attention and support** to your classmates during their presentations. This often requires silence while they work and you observe. You can learn a great deal from watching others work. *Please note that it is considered extremely discourteous to enter or leave the room while others are working, or to speak quietly while others are performing.*
- 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 Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

#### Attendance Policy

- Attendance is mandatory.
- You may receive two (2) excused absences for family emergencies, serious illness, or official UNT business. Students must show written proof. Doctors' appointments are not excused.
- If you have one (1) unexcused absence by mid-semester, you may be dropped from the course by the instructor.
- Each unexcused absence lowers the final grade 5 points on a scale of 100 points possible.
- The professor's roll book is the official record of absences and tardiness. Ask the professor to check the roll book to ensure that your attendance record is correct. Leaving class early, sleeping, checking cell phone, reading outside material will count as an absence.
- Suggested Dance and Theatre attendance policy expects the number of allowable absences should not exceed 10% of the total class meetings for the semester. For example, if a class meets twice a week for 15 weeks, then the number of allowable absences before the students receives a failing grade (or is withdrawn) is three (3).

**Bottom Line: Class attendance is mandatory.**

## Class Participation & Rehearsals

- Most of your assignments will involve working with other people. Be the type of person that you would want to work with. Areas you will be evaluated are: *Attitude, Willingness to Learn, Citizenship, Adding to the conversation, work ethic, improvement over the semester, acceptance of grades earned and how absences are handled.*
- To avoid disrupting the class, all cell phones must be turned off. No texting allowed.
- If a student is disruptive, they will be asked to leave and be counted absent.
- **Rehearsals for Scenes:**
  - Directors are required to organize rehearsals outside of class and recruit volunteer actors to augment those in the Director's Ensemble.
  - Directors are responsible for clearly communicating rehearsal schedule to their actors.
  - Directors are responsible for finding rehearsal space. You can reserve space in the D+T office.
  - Make sure that times and places are clearly decided upon.
  - Once a plan is made, you must be there. It is unforgivable to call a rehearsal and then be late or worse, not show up.

## Cheating/Plagiarism

The Student Code of Conduct prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty. If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing (including but not limited to 'cutting and pasting' unattributed passages from the Internet), the student will receive an F for that assignment. If the student is caught a second time, the student will receive an F for the course. With plagiarism, it will also be incumbent upon the student to demonstrate that s/he has not plagiarized (rough drafts of papers, notes, outlines, annotated source materials, etc.) so please retain all evidence of your having done writing projects yourself.

## Subject Matter Disclaimer

**Theatre is an art, which imitates human living:** since sexuality and violence are a part of human living, some materials in this class may deal with sexual and violent images, behaviors, situations and language. **People who may be offended by such materials may want to reconsider taking this course.**

## Attendance at all UNT DTA Season Productions

You will receive vouchers for free tickets to the productions. See the Box Office for further information.

## Required Course Textbook

Hodge, Francis and Michael McLain, *Play Directing: Analysis, Communication, and Style*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston, Allyn & Bacon, 2010.

Scripts from plays you want to direct this semester.

### Recommended books:

Caldarone, Marina and Maggie Lloyd Williams, *Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus*. Hollywood, Quite Specific Media Group, Ltd. 2004.  
Hauser, Frank and Russell Reich, *Notes on Directing*. New York, RCR Creative Press, 2003.  
Jory, Jon, *Tips: Ideas for Directors*. Hanover, N.H., Smith and Kraus, 2002.

## Assignments and Grading

Silent Tension		A= excellent (100-90)
My Photo Story		B= good (89-80)
Brecht Test		C=average (79-70)
Final Scene	40%	D= (69-60)
		F = (59 or below)

Social Norm	
Brecht Analysis	
Director's Book	
Final Reflection	
Play Critiques (2)	
Peer Director Evaluation	30%

### Attendance (Class and Productions)

Class Participation	
Learning Activities	
Actor Evaluations	30%
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	100%

## **Performance Assignments**

For every assignment you will be asked to complete, you will receive **an assignment sheet and a rubric** as to my expectations. I am always happy to answer questions about an assignment but if I am not available please refer to these sheets. With some of the performances you will be assigned a written portion that will help with understanding of your interpretation. *Use these sheets when creating your performance or writing play analysis and artistic vision as a checklist to be sure you have completed the assignment.* **The most egregious mistake I see student's make is not completing all portions of an assignment.**

## **Final Period**

- Final scene performances will be held April 27 and April 29 during class time (2:00-4:20). All students are required to see all scenes on both days.
- The Final Reflection and scene critiques will be due Monday May 4, 1:30-3:30. This is your Final Exam and attendance is mandatory.

## **Late Assignments**

**No late assignment.** Directing scenes will be administered only on the day that is listed on the assignment sheet. This is to guarantee equitable treatment of all students. Please acquaint yourself with the calendar attached. ***In theatre, the curtain rises on opening night regardless.*** As far as any written assignments, consider the "due date" the last moment I will take the assignment. Any written assignment may be turned in early. This allows you to structure your study schedule to allow you time for other course assignments. *Time Management is a life skill. If you are not good at time management, this is the semester you will conquer this skill.* **Bottom line: Any assignment can be early. Nothing can be late. Show initiative.**

## **Grades**

There is a grading rubric that has been designed for each assignment. This tool is used to stay as objective and fair as possible. **You are responsible for knowledge of your grade at all times.** If you have any questions about your grades, please contact me and I will be happy to help you. **Grades will not be discussed over the phone.**

## **Incompletes**

Only under extraordinary circumstances will an Incomplete be given.

## **Withdrawal**

Should you choose to drop this course, you must initiate the drop and acquire all the proper signatures and paperwork. If that process is not completed, you will be subject to a WF or F at the close of the semester.

## **Course Fees**

The fees for this course are used for copying, equipment, productions and guest artists.

## **Fitness**

This course is designed to accommodate all levels of physical ability and fitness. As with any physical training, there will be some soreness and muscular fatigue as a result of a new use of the body. This is normal and healthy. *However, you are responsible for your own health.* If you are in doubt as to whether you can perform some aspect of the exercises, please refrain from doing so until you can consult a physician. If you need to refrain from doing significant portions of the coursework due to this condition, you must get written verification from a physician and be prepared to do alternative assignments.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act Notice**

The UNT Department of Dance and Theatre does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the recruitment or admission of students. The content of this class requires each student to (a) actively participate in a safe manner and (b) spontaneously process visual and verbal cues.

*The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to*

*implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.*

### **Accommodation**

Please let me know if you need accommodation for religious holidays or other issues.

### **SPOT**

The Student Perception of Teaching Effectiveness (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized class at UNT. This short survey will be conducted in class on your laptop or cellphone at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in your feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider your "Personal Growth Assessment Assignment" and the SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

### **Future Training and Possibilities of Production**

Our Directing sequence includes:

- Directing I: Scene Study
- Directing II: Play Conceptualization and Design Collaboration
- Directing Practicum: Rehearsal and Performance of Plays

There are many opportunities to direct in D+T. Students must have at least Directing I to be considered to direct a "First Stage" one act. More advanced students may be chosen to direct for the "Lab Series" or Summer Arts Festival which are small budgeted full-length productions with the possibility of designers and technical support as part of our season. Apply early January for a place in next year's season.

There are also opportunities as Assistant to the Director (no directing classes), Assistant Director (Directing I), and Associate Director (Directing II). Please let me know of interest.

**Last day to withdraw with a grade of W: March 30, 2020**

***I am looking forward to getting to know each of you!***