

Duke University Department of Theater Studies (1-2-18)
Directing 255S-01*
Instructor: Jeff Storer
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TTh 10:05-11:35 Bryan Center 127

Office Hours: Page Auditorium O3D (enter below: off Bryan Center Walkway; enter from the entrance of Page, turn right and go downstairs.) Office Hours: T TH, 12:00-1:00, or by appointment. Contact instructor at bear@duke.edu to schedule appointment.

***Please Note: This class will count for the Directing Requirement for a Department of Theater Studies Major or Minor, or a Musical Theater Minor.**

Course Description:

(AL) Establishment of basic skills of the director's work of moving from script to stage to audience; analyzing texts from a director's point of view; basic stage articulation of viewpoint; development of skills in mechanics and vocabulary of directing. Reading, writing, and practical projects make up the work in the course.

Note: Your final project for Directing will be scheduled during the last three classes of the course: April 17th, April 19 and April 24th. All written work will be due on April 24th. No written work will be accepted after class starting time on the 24th of April.

REQUIREMENTS/Grade Breakdown:

Assignment #1

Definition/Demonstration of assigned elements of form. **10 points.**

Assignment #2

4 journal entries that will respond to work you see in class, your own work, professional productions and in response to the reading assignments. Due on dates indicated on the calendar. Late entries will automatically drop that week's journal grade by 5 points. **10 points each= 40 points.**

A fifth journal entry will be due at the end of the semester and will accompany your final paper and project. This will be a self-evaluation and grade. This journal entry will not be graded but is required at the beginning of our last class period.

You must attend performances of THE MOORS (Manbites Dog Theater; dates on calendar) and THE BODY ARTIST (Reynolds Theater; dates on calendar) and either HAMLET or ST. JOAN (in the new Ruby arts center, dates on calendar. These pieces are devised by guest artists Bedlam Theater Compan) You will be asked to write about the directing of these projects in the above journals. If you are participating in one of these production, you will write about your observations of the process from the inside.

(continued)

Assignment #3

Element Study: You must direct your own and perform in a fellow classmate’s element study. You will draw a partner randomly for this project. This project is about collaboration as well as your ability to use the elements of form in a short piece of your own creation. Element Study should not exceed 10 minutes in length. This piece should have a distinct beginning, middle and end. More detailed description to follow. 15 points.

Assignment #4 and #5

Scene #1 (From either *The Baltimore Waltz* or *The Glass Menagerie*):

1st showing (silent exploration) 10 points.
2nd showing (with complete author’s text.) 15 points.

You must perform in and direct a scene.

Assignment #6

Prompt Book for Final Directing Project. 15 points.

Assignment #7

Written Play Analysis. 15 Points.

Assignment #8

Final Directing Project. 40 point.

Note: Your Self-Evaluation and Grade will be handed in with your final written work.

-Participation. 40 points : Attendance, collegiality and the willingness to engage in class activities will be key to your participation grade (worth 40 points.) Note that there are no approved absences without prior consent of the instructor. If the instructor and student agree upon an approved absence (this includes all religious holidays, dean’s and athletic excuses) all work must still be completed and shown in class. Failure to meet fellow students for scheduled outside of class rehearsals will also affect this grade. When in doubt, ask instructor.

-Grade Breakdown:

Grade based on seriousness of approach, ability, effort, growth, the quality of participation, curiosity and passion. A grade will be given for each exercise and written assignment. All in class work will be followed by a instructor/peer feedback session. If students are interested in the grades they are receiving for performance exercises and written work, they should make an appointment to discuss grades with the instructor. As suggested by the University, "A's" will be reserved for "Exceptional" work.

Assignment #1	10 points
Assignment #2	40 points
Assignment #3	15 points
Assignment #4	10 points
Assignment #5	15 points
Assignment #6	15 points
Assignment #7	15 points
Assignment #8	40 points
Participation	40 points
Total Points: 200 points	%2 = Course Grade % for Semester.

Required Reading: The following 5 texts should be purchased from the Duke Book Store or Amazon.

Bloom, Michael	<i>Thinking Like a Director: A Practical Handbook</i> ; Faber and Faber Inc., 2001 9780571199945 REQ
Bogart, Anne	<i>A Director Prepares: Prepares, Seven essays on Art and Theater</i> ; Routledge, 2009 780415238328 REQ
Brook, Peter	<i>The Empty Space</i> ; Atheneum, 1968 9780684829579 REQ
Vogel, Vogel	<i>The Baltimore Waltz</i> ; 9780822213598 REQ
Williams, Tennessee	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i> ; 9780811214049 REQ
Cole, Susan Letzler	<i>Directors in Rehearsal</i> ; Routledge, 1992 9780878300198 REQ (NOTE*: Excerpts from this will be distributed in class.)
Cole, Toby and Chinoy, Helen Krich	<i>Directors on Directing</i> The Director at Work, Elia Kazan Notebook for <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> ; 1963, MacMillan Publishing. (NOTE*: Excerpts from this will be distributed in class.)

Suggested Reading:

Artaud, Antonin	<i>The Theater and Its Double</i>
Baker, Paul	<i>Integration of Abilities: Exercises for Creative Growth</i>
Barrault, Jean Louis	<i>Reflections on the Theater</i>
Brecht, Bertolt	<i>Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic</i>
Brook, Peter	<i>The Shifting Point</i>
Clurman, Harold	<i>On Directing</i>
Croyden, Margaret	<i>Lunatics, Lovers and Poets</i>
Grotowski, Jerzy	<i>Towards a Poor Theater</i>
Jones, Robert Edmund	<i>The Dramatic Imagination</i>

(continued)

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Assignment #1

Elements of Form

Define, discuss, demonstrate and give examples of your assigned elements; use text, music, visuals. You are directing our thorough understanding of the elements. Investigate elements and bring understanding to the concept. We are most interested in how we perceive these elements in the world around us, so do not focus your presentation exclusively on theater application. Your presentation should not exceed 10 minutes for presentation of all the elements you have been assigned. Each presentation will be followed by a short discussion.

Elements of Form:

- 1) **SPACE**
- 2) **LINE (DIRECTION)**

- 3) **COLOR**
- 4) **TEXTURE**

- 5) **SILHOUETTE**
- 6) **SHAPE**

- 7) **RHYTHM (TIME)**
- 8) **SOUND (SILENCE)**

- 9) **LIGHT (DARKNESS)**
- 10) **PHYSICAL GESTURE**

- 11) **ARCHITECTURE**
- 12) **TOPOGRAPHY (GROUNDPLAN)**

How are these elements inter-dependent on one other?

Assignment #2

Journal Entries

During the course of the semester you will turn in 4 journal entries. Each entry will consist of a written assignment creating an essay covering the topics below. Each journal entry should be approximately 2-3 pages and word-processed. Journal entries are to be turned in as indicated on class calendar. The student is responsible for emailing the entry to the instructor. Entries are due the day of class and should be emailed to instructor prior to the class on which it is due. Any late entries will result in an automatic loss of 5 points off your grade for that entry, regardless of content.

NOTE: Email file should **ALWAYS** be titled with students last name and the name of the assignment. For example (**STORER Journal 1.docx.**) Documents should **NOT be PDF.S and should be saved as Word documents.**

Each journal entry will include:

-Response to readings in-class, on campus, and off campus performances and response to lectures, discussions, and in class presentations since the last journal entry was due.

-There will be a fifth and final journal entry that will be a self-evaluation and grade that will be due prior to the final period.

Assignment #3

Element Study.

Create a piece of theater using the elements of form we have discussed. You should restrict yourself EXCLUSIVELY to the below list of Given Circumstances. An analysis will follow each study. This analysis will be centered around what has been communicated and your use of the elements.

Given Circumstances are:

- 1) **Rehearsal Studio-As Is. You may use blocks, tables and existing windows, doors and room lighting provided by the work space..**
- 2) **1-3 balls; or circular objects. You must use at least one and not more than three. If you have a question as to the circularity of your object , ASK.**
- 3) **A rope, or string. 1-2 yards in length.**
- 4) **No more than two armless, straight back chairs, you may use none.**
- 5) **No more that four lines of text. Words, phrases, or complete lines may be repeated.**
- 6) **You may use music or sound. But the total amount of text in the study may still not exceed four lines.**
- 7) **You may use up to four light sources. You must use at least one practical (actor operated) light source.**
- 8) **You must use one or two actors. All actors must be from this class. You will be assigned one actor, if you use a second, you will need to negotiate that with the individual that agrees to work with you.**
- 9) **You should execute any tech that you have.**
- 10) **You may use a suitcase.**
- 11) **You may use a doll.**
- 12) **You may use a glass of water**
- 13) **Length of study may not exceed 10 minutes.**
- 14) **The study should have a beginning, middle and end and be focused on communicating a story to the audience.**
- 14) **The piece should have at least one transition. (e.g. passage of time or shift in place.)**

(continued)

Assignment #4 and #5

Scene One

-Each student will be asked to direct a short scene from *The Glass Menagerie* or *The Baltimore Waltz*.

-Each student will be asked to act in a short scene from *The Glass Menagerie* or *The Baltimore Waltz*.

-1st showing of the scene will be without text. Sound or Music with no text are allowed. Length of scene should be 10 minutes, max.

-2nd showing of the scene will be using the playwrights text, as written. Length of scene should be 15 minutes, max.

Assignment #6

The Book

The book should:

-be loose leaf.

-have script mounted on the right side of the page.

-include a ground plan for your scene.

-have pockets front and back for loose notes etc.

-have room for class notes, analysis and script.

-the entire play script should be divided according to action breakdown.

-at least the length of the scene cutting should be pre-blocked, notated and diagramed.

Assignment #7

Written Play Analysis.* (Outline follows)

Assignment #8

Final Directing Project. (Scene to be selected by student, but must be approved by instructor. 15 minute cut (max) from a full length play.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Action: is all human activity. Drama is structured action. Dramatic action indicates that something is changing. Action occurs when something happens that makes or permits something else to happen.

Blocking: is where the people are in space; it is action motivated by character and story; it is the three-dimensional shape of the play, the sculpture of the play.

(definitions continued)

Character: is the actor's interpretation of the human condition as revealed through the story; the tools to create this interpretation are the actor's voice, movement and inner resources. An actor discovers the skeleton of character through dramatic action.

Climax: is a high point of interest for the characters, a single moment following a crisis. It is the instant when conflict is settled.

Conflict: is the essence of drama. What someone wants (motivation) VS what stands in the way of them getting what they want (obstacle.) The conflict of the play is identified between two battling forces; (see play analysis) most often embodied by characters.

Crisis: is the point at which the audience knows there is no turning back. The two opposing forces are headed for a final confrontation.

Exposition: is the revelation of information needed by the audience to understand the play's action. There are two types of exposition: (1) information known to everyone on stage or (2) information known by only some or one of the characters.

Forward (or plant): is anything that arouses an audience's interest in things yet to come. It is a form of preparation that justifies and enhances the emotional effect of later important action. Often creates anticipation for what will follow.

Given Circumstances: are everything that you have with which to work; the story: its facts, its events, time and place of action, conditions of life; the actor, director and designer's interpretation; all of the collaborative artists involved with the project; the resources: the physical theatre space, lights, costumes, properties, and sound. Always start by directing all your attention to the given circumstances. They are always within reach.

Intention (motivation, objective): is the character's real reason for performing an action.

a. It begins with "I want to....." or "I must..."

b. It is followed by an active verb. (i.e. sleep or speak or remember; not "to be drunk" or "to be angry)

Intrusion: is a pushing, thrusting, or forcing in. It is the thing that comes along and happens, setting free the irresistible forces that run a play from that point on.

Motivation: is what drives a character to get what they want.

Obstacle: is any resistance to a character getting what they want.

Plot: the structured action. Plot is the conscious arrangement, or organization, of the events in a story. Something happens, which leads to something else happening, which leads to something else.

Stasis: a condition of balance among various forces; motionlessness; a standing still; an unchanging stability; a state in which all forces balance each other, resulting in no movement.

Story: is the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings. The story is a sequence of certain kinds of events, standing in special relationship to one another.

Tactics: How a character goes about getting what they want; the how; action.

Theme: an abstract concept which part or all of that play is exploring.

Urgency: What is at stake. What will happen if s/he does not get what they want? You must solve the problem in an effort to win.

Addendum #1

FOCUS QUESTIONS

A. SITUATION (Given Circumstances; The "moment before.")

What just happened?

B. PREPARATION

How does that make me feel?

C. OBJECTIVE

What do I need/or want? (based on how I feel about this situation.)

D. ACTION (The How; Tactics)

How am I going to get what I want?

E. URGENCY (Literally and Emotionally)

What will happen to me if I don't get what I want?

F. OBSTACLE

What is in the way of my getting what I want?

G. RELATIONSHIP

In what ways do I know this other person? (family, lovers, acquaintances, business, brought together by a crisis, first meeting.) How does this affect TACTICS and URGENCY?

Addendum #2

Written Play Analysis.

Due on Final Day.

I. Elements of Form

- a. **Upon reading the play, what were your first impressions in terms of the elements of form?**
Which elements gave you the strongest feelings about the play?
- b. **Analyze the play in terms of the elements of form we discussed at the beginning of the semester:**
 - SPACE**
 - COLOR**
 - TEXTURE**
 - LINE (DIRECTION)**
 - SILHOUETTE (SHAPE)**
 - RHYTHM (TIME)**
 - SOUND (SILENCE)**
 - LIGHT (DARKNESS)**
 - PHYSICAL GESTURE**
 - ARCHITECTURE and TOPOGRAPHY (GROUNDPLAN)**

II. Approach to the Play. (Reference Chapter 5, Bloom)

- a. Briefly, tell the story of the play. What is the **EVENT** of the play.
- b. Briefly, outline the structure of the play.
- c. What story do you want to tell.
- d. What is the present day significance of the play to our audiences? Of all the plays you had to choose from, why did you choose this script?
- e. How would you describe the genre of this play.
- f. When and where is the action set? Why?
- g. Describe the "world of the play." What are the rules of that world?
- h. What are some potential design metaphors from the text? What are some additional design metaphors (supported by the text) that you would discuss with your designers?

III. Environment.

Research and describe the locales in which the play takes place.

IV. Research.

You must reference at least 10 research resources. No more than 5 of these can be pure internet sources.

Types of research may include the following:

- a. **Work of the playwright**
- b. **Period Research (cont.)**

Research and discuss the relevance of historic, political, social, artistic and scientific aspects of the period in which the play was written and/or is set.

This can include movies, television, recordings, theater and popular periodicals of the period.

(*See Addendum at the bottom of this outline for information about documenting and diversifying research sources.)

- c. **Biographical and critical information on the playwright.**
- d. **Plays production history.**
- e. **Field research.**

V. Character.

Analyze two significant characters.

- a. Discuss the intellectual, emotional and physical characteristics of each character.

(written play analysis continued)

(written play analysis continued)

- b. What do each of these characters WANT in the play? How do they go about getting it?
- c. Who is the protagonist of the play? And Why? (written analysis continued)
- d. Follow the protagonist action for action through the scene you are directing in terms of Motivation-Obstacle-Deed.
- e. What would be the important things to consider in casting these two characters?

VI. Sound-Language

- a. What special sound/music demands are a part of the script?
- b. What special considerations are part of the language of the play?

VII. Events.

What are the major events of the play? (Bloom, page 49)

VIII. Title.

What is the significance of the title of the play?

IX. Visual Elements (Reference Chapter 6-Bloom)

You may include copies of research and thumb nail sketches in your book.

- a. Discuss the overall visual feelings you have about the play. Describe what you see as YOU tell the story.
- b. If you were the designers for this play, what are some of the considerations that would concern you about costumes, settings, and lights. Use your reactions to the elements of form in your discussion.
- c. What Physical elements in the setting would you emphasize?

X. Summary

Discuss your responses to the preparation and execution of this project. Why did you choose this play? Would you like to direct a full length production of this play? Why or why not?

Addendum #3 Research Documentation

- 1) The *MLA Handbook* is our preferred system and you will be required to purchase a copy
- 2) But because we come from different disciplines, many systems of documentation will work just fine. Any system you use must include:
 - 1) a complete citation in a) footnotes or b) endnotes or c) parenthetical references including page numbers
 - 2) A List of Works Cited

Please keep in mind that the purpose of documentation is both to give credit to your sources and to allow others to use you as a source in their own research. The second purpose is mostly moot now but becomes important in business, law, grant writing, graduate school, etc. If we cannot go to a book or a website and locate the facts/opinions/quotations in your paper, the documentation has not met its purpose.

You may find the following helpful:

1) **The “but everything comes from sources” issue.** When doing a research paper, it’s pretty normal for almost everything in the paper to come from sources. It’s tempting to document only quotations, which indeed must be clearly documented. But certain kinds of factual information must be documented as well.

--- A good rule is to document information you would be unlikely to know on your own -- unless you happened to know it without any source, in which case no documentation would be needed. In general, you do not have to document information that comes within the realm of common knowledge or is repeated in multiple sources: for example, the date a specific museum was opened; the precise date of the Kennedy assassination.

--- Still, we all encounter situations when we have no factual knowledge about a subject before we did research and draw multiple bits of factual information from the same source or from several sources. One way to handle this is to include an endnote which says something like: “All information about the Metropolitan Museum’s directors comes from [enter source/s in normal endnote form]. Another is to have a parenthetical reference at the end of a paragraph or section which includes a statement like: (Barr, pp. 1-20. All the factual information in this paragraph comes from this source.]

2) **The internet.** Most of you will use internet sources and should follow a standard system in documenting such sources: the *MLA Handbook* provides a system. There can be special problems: for example, websites typically do not reproduce page numbers available in original sources. Follow a standard system to indicate location. For your purposes right now, identifying the website will usually be sufficient. But be aware that websites sometimes disappear and, in more advanced work, it is usually considered necessary to consult the original and to supply page references.

3) **Striking a balance between kinds of sources.** As indicated on the syllabi, you should always have some non-internet sources – defined here as books, parts of books, or periodicals consulted in hard copy -- in part because internet sources are more likely to be inaccurate than print sources and in part because internet sites tend to deal in 1-2 page information “bits.” In addition, work in a library or bookstore allows for a wider range of discovery that is part of the research experience. Be careful not to use outdated sources (for example, a history of “current” fashion published in 1952). The range of quality of the sources you consulted contributes to the grade received on a research paper.

4) You should pay attention to guidelines for the number of library or bookstore sources required for each assignment. You are **always** free, and indeed encouraged, to use more than the minimum number of sources (internet and non-internet). Multiple sources usually make for a richer and better paper.

Class Calendar
READING, WRITING and PROJECT DUE DATES
Theatrst 255 S 1005-1135

FINAL: Directing, April 17, 19 and 24.

Week One

Reading: Peter Brook, The Empty Space

Thursday, January 11 Introduction of the Course
Choose Elements, Choose Element
Study Partners

Week Two

Reading: Thinking Like A Director- Preface, Introduction, Part One.

Tuesday, January 16 Element definitions/demonstrations
1-5.
Discuss Empty Space. Deadly. Holy.

Thursday, January 18 Element definitions/demonstrations
6-10
Discuss Empty Space. Rough. Immediate.

Week Three

Reading: The Baltimore Waltz and The Glass Menagerie

Tuesday, January 23 Discuss Bloom Reading Due this week. Clarify
Element Study.

Wednesday, January 24 **Drop/Add Ends. Directing Class invited to the
Final Dress of The Body Artist.**

Don DeLillo's The Body Artist January 25-27.

Thursday, January 25 Discuss The Glass Menagerie.
Discuss The Baltimore Waltz.

Week Four

Reading: Thinking Like a Director, Part Two.

Tuesday, January 30 Choose Scene #1. Draw Lots. Blocking.

Thursday, February 1st BLOCKING

Week Five

Reading: Thinking Like a Director, Part Three

Tuesday, February 6th Journal #1 Due. Discuss Bloom, Part Two.
Organization of Rehearsals.

Thursday, February 8th Element Studies 1-4

Week Six

Reading: Bogart- Memory and Violence

Tuesday, February 13th Element Studies 5-7

Thursday, February 15th Element Studies 8-10

Week Seven

Reading: Bogart- Eroticism and Terror

Tuesday, February 20th Discuss Bloom, Part Three. Pre-Blocking.
Notation. Diagraming. Discuss Bogart.

Thursday, February 22nd BEDLAM GUESTS

The Moors, Manbites Dog Theater, February 22- March 10th

Bedlam's St. Joan and Hamlet February 21-25

Week Eight

Reading: Bogart- Stereotype, Embarrassment and Resistance.

Tuesday, February 27 Discuss Bogart. Catch Up. Silent Scenes (1-2)

Thursday, March 1st Journal #2 Due. Silent Scenes (3-6)
Discuss Bogart

Week Nine

Reading: Directors in Rehearsal-4-Emily Mann

Tuesday, March 6 Silent scenes (7-10)

Thursday, March 8 No Class

Friday, March 9-18 Spring Break Begins

Week Ten

Reading: Directors in Rehearsal-Joanne Akalitis

Tuesday, March 20 Scenes with Text (1-3) Discuss Mann/Akalitis.

Thursday, March 22 Scenes with Text (4-6) Journal #3 Due.

Week Eleven

Reading: (Handed out) Elia Kazan, Notebook for A Streetcar Named Desire.

Tuesday, March 27 Scenes with Text (7-9)

Thursday, March 29 Scenes with Text (10) Catch- Up

Week Twelve

Wednesday, April 4 Fall 2018, Registration begins.

Tuesday, April 3 Directors Discuss Final Approach
(1-4) Discuss Elia Kazan.

Thursday, April 5 Kazan, Directors Discuss Final Approach (5-8)

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, April 10 Directors Discuss Final Approach (9-10)

Thursday, April 12 Registration Ends.

Thursday, April 12 Catch-Up, Journal #4 due.

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, April 17 Final Scenes (1-3)

Thursday, April 19 Final Scenes (4-6)

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, April 24 Final Scenes (7-10)

**Final Paper Due. All Notebooks Due. Self-Evaluation and Grade Due. All
Written work is due, No late assignments will be accepted.
Directing Book. Due on Final Day.**