

COURSE SYLLABUS

THR467.01 and .02

DIRECTING II

3 Credit Hours

Spring 2008

THR467.01 UTC 151, 9:00 to 10:20 a.m. MW

THR467.02 UTC 105, 9:30-10:50 a.m. TTh

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OFFICE HOURS: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Please make appointments.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The second half of play directing emphasizes a wide variety of theatrical styles, research, and analysis of differing versions of scripts in translation. Students direct short scenes to develop skills in critique, communication with actors, bringing the author's intent to life, and script and style analysis. In addition, students work with student designers and develop blocking and design concepts for three-quarter and proscenium staging. Class is taught through lecture, demonstration, outside rehearsal and class critiques. Prerequisite: junior standing and THR466 or permission of the instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student directors should

- have a basic directing methodology
- understand differing approaches to directing a variety of theatrical styles, i.e. musical theatre vs. modern realism
- have begun to develop good communication skills with actors
- understand blocking/composition in both three-quarter round and proscenium staging
- have a basis for developing a design concept for a play in conjunction with a designer
- have a recognition of the importance of research
- have a basic vocabulary and structure to use for productive critiques.

Required TEXTBOOK or References

PLAYING PERIOD PLAYS by Lyn Oxenford

A copy of all scripts chosen by the student for directing projects

A copy of sheet music needed for the musical assignment chosen by student

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

2 inch 3-ring loose leaf notebook to fit 11 X 8-1/2 inch paper

Typing/copy paper for reports

May need to purchase sheet music for the musical directing scene

Props may be borrowed from the departmental prop supply or brought from home. Students are not encouraged the spend money on a lot of props, although food props may have to be purchased by student director, if needed for scenes.

Old magazines for collage work

An architect's ruler for ground plans

ATTENDANCE POLICY

After 3 absences in an MW or T-day class, any additional non-school related absences **WILL** cause a 2-point cut each in the overall semester grade up to a full letter grade. An unexcused absence on a day when a report or assignment is due will result in a **0** for that assignment. **SCENES SHOULD GO UP WHEN SCHEDULED.** Absences may be excused only if there is a written excuse signed by medical personnel or with proof of a family emergency; such proof to be negotiated with instructor, or for religious holy days or approved university-related business. Travel for university business will not count as an absence. (Being “held up in traffic” in another city is **NOT** excused.) Students must arrange with the instructor well in advance of a school related absence or holy day absence the dates to make up any missed assignments. Failure to do so may result in a **0** on the assignment. If a student misses an assignment due to an excused absence, the assignment may be postponed only once and should be completed within a maximum of 5 school days after returning to class.

ASSIGNMENTS – All scenes must be in English and actors must be clothed.

1. First directing scene 5 to 7 minutes in length: A third of the students will direct scenes from plays that depart from realism written between 1920 and 1980 by French, Italian, or German playwrights; a third of the students will direct scenes written after 2000 by American or British playwrights; a third will direct scenes from plays written by Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller or Eugene O’Neil.
2. Second directing scene 5 to 7 minutes in length. Half of the students will direct a Shakespearean scene (other than Romeo and Juliet or A Midsummer Night’s Dream;) half will direct a classical Greek scene. Choices to be determined with instructor. It is preferred that period scenes be done in period performance style.
3. The first scene a student directs will be accompanied by a promptbook, glossary, ground plan, with explanation, if appropriate, research work, and a one page description of the playwrights style and performance style, and a style analysis report to be turned in on the day a scene is performed. Handouts with specifics will be available.
4. The period scenes will be accompanied by a 4-8 page style analysis, collage of scene dynamics, a translation defense, if appropriate and a one page report on additional research.
5. Design work: Half of the student directors will be assigned a student set designer from the directing class for the first scene, and the other half will work with a student set designer from the directing class for the second scene. Both director and designer will be graded on the final set design presented in each case.
6. An 8 to 12 minute musical scene approved by the instructor. The scene **MUST INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE SONG, ONE DANCE AND ONE DIALOGUE SECTION.** Failure to include elements will cost 33 points on the grade. Musical scenes will be accompanied by a one to two page research report—and an analysis of songs and dance plus design explanation, if appropriate. The scene should be drawn from a section of the script rather than the cutting coming from different sections of the script. Directors may do their own choreography and musical directing or may choose a choreographer and musical director. Only the director will receive a grade. **NO SCENES MAY BE PERFORMED WITHOUT MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT!!! NO SCENES MAY BE PERFORMED WITH RECORDINGS THAT HAVE A VOCAL ON THEM!** The scene will receive a double **0** if this rule regarding accompaniment is broken therefore, very early in the semester, the student should get the

professor's approval of the musical scene choice and have an in-hand copy of the necessary libretto and sheet music or instrumental recording. Even if a pianist is to accompany the scene live, an early recording **MUST** be made to protect the director in case the pianist should not be able to fulfill his/her obligation. **THE DANCE MUST EVIDENCE THE NEED FOR GENUINE DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY, NOT MERELY STAGING OR A COUPLE CLUMSILY "WALTZING" AROUND THE STAGE BRIEFLY.** Do not pick scenes not written for a dance!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

7. Students will give student director's verbal and/or written critiques of scene work. These critiques are not graded. One scene must be $\frac{3}{4}$ round.

8. All class members are **REQUIRED** to attend either a full dress rehearsal or performance of all theatre department season productions.

Note: For the sake of ease in casting, and accompaniment, half of the class should do scene 2 in the third time slot and half should do the musical in the second time slot.

EXAMS

There are no written exams. The scene in the third slot is the final exam. Directors must see and write a critique for at least fifteen final scenes other than their own.

GRADING

Naturally in a performance oriented course, grading is somewhat subjective because a value judgment must be made. A grading sheet with point values for each area of scene work will be used by the instructor. This point system will be reviewed in advance with the students. The grading scale is "A" = 90-100; "B" = 80-89; "C" = 70-79; "D" = 60-69 and "F" = 59 or below. There are no extra credit options. Written work counts as 50% of the semester grade. The first directing scene counts as a single grade. The remaining 2 directing scenes count as a double grade. Both prompt books and reports count as a single grade each time. Design work counts as a single grade for the designer. Failure to turn in titles or scene script and music on due dates will cause a 5 point cut in the grade for that assignment. Failure to see scenes and write at least 15 critiques for finals scenes will cause a 2 point cut for each scene under 15 on the final scene grade. Failure to attend critique session on final exam day will cause a 10 point cut in the final scene grade unless permission to be absent has been given by the professor.

Written work and scenes should be presented during class on the assigned day unless you have a validated medical excuse or proven family emergency. Do not "forget" to bring your written work to class and expect to turn it in later that day. In a few instances when a postponement due to validated illness or emergency is allowed, the postponed scene should go up within 1 to 5 class days of the absent director's return to class. Should a scene not go up and there is no validated excuse, no postponement will be allowed and the director will receive a double **0** on the scene and a **0** on the report/promptbook. No makeup work is allowed during finals week for anything related to the first two scenes. It is possible for a scene to go up without the student director in attendance provided the director was at the final rehearsal within 2 days prior to performance. Should an actor fail to appear for performance, the director or someone designated by the director shall perform the role "on book" if necessary.

Finally excessive absences will adversely affect the semester grade. See "ATTENDANCE" section. No grades are posted online until after finals.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Any student found guilty of dishonest in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against any student accused of any form of academic dishonesty. In THR467, particular concerns are plagiarism, failure to read entire plays from which scenes are taken, any form of prompting of performers, or taking credit for directing work done by someone else. Any of the above may result in severe grade penalties.

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT

University policy states that students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. Please turn off or mute cellular phones/pagers. Students are prohibited from eating, drinking, using tobacco products, and use of offensive language in class, except in scenes. There is no need to light candles or cigarettes in scenes. Reading newspapers, etc, sleeping or talking while others are performing or the professor is lecturing are also prohibited.

Inappropriate or distracting behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave the classroom or being reported to the Dean of Student Life for disciplinary action. Gentlemen, please remove your caps.

VISITORS

Unannounced visitors to the classroom must present a current official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom and have permission of the instructor to remain. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. Visitors must not present a disruption to the class.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic or Student Life program or activity. Disabled students may request assistance with academically related problems stemming from individual disabilities by contacting the Director of the Counseling Center in the Lee Drain Annex by calling (936) 294-1720.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. Students must be excused to travel for observance of a religious holy day. A student who wishes to be excused for a religious holy day must present the instructor with a written statement describing concerning the holy day(s) and the travel involved. The instructor should provide the student with a written description for the completion of missed exams or assignments.