

**UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD**  
**College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences**  
**THAR 4331 / Fundamentals of Directing**  
**Syllabus**

**Catalog description:** This course is an introduction to the role of the Director in the production of plays for the stage, structural and critical thinking, casting, and rehearsing a play, and includes preparation of scenes for laboratory presentation.

**Context:** Although this course satisfies the Fine Arts core requirement, it is intended audience is Theatre Arts majors and minors. It is an upper division required class for Theatre Arts majors. It is suggested, but not required, that the class be taken in a THAR major's junior or senior year. Prerequisites: THAR 1322 and 2361 or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit. Fee.

**Course overview:** The purpose of this course is to develop student understanding and ability to wield the functions and standard practices of the theatre director. It identifies these functions and practices and engages students in practical application of them. The course includes study of the analytic processes and critical thinking directors engage to form an interpretative approach to a production as well as the practical techniques used to transform such an approach into appreciable forms for an audience. This course requires mandatory attendance and full participation in all class exercises.

| <b>Course outcomes</b>  | <b>Assessment</b>   |
|---|---|
| Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:  | The outcomes will be assessed by:   |
| 1. Identify the director's five primary functions.  | Quizzes or Examination and Classroom Discussion   |
| 2. Apply the functions of the director through a series of class exercises  | Class Exercises and Essays  |
| 3. Define the organization of dramatic elements in dramatic literature of differing forms and styles.   | Classroom Discussion; Quizzes and/or Exams  |
| 4. Analytically derive a coherent, textually supportable dramatic action from a play.   | Classroom Discussion; Written Essays; Directing Exercises; Scene Projects                   |
| 5. Craft interpretations that express an action from a particular point of view and construct approaches for the transformation of interpretation into a mise-en-scene and stage action perceivable to an audience. | Written Essays; Directing Exercises; Scene Projects; Self-Evaluation                        |
| 6. Defining beats, event frames, and a dramatic action, interpret this same literature, stage it, and coach performers towards the presentation of scene performances   | Classroom Discussions or Exercises; Scene Projects (preparation and rehearsal/performances) |

**Disability statement**

The University of the Incarnate Word is committed to providing a supportive, challenging, diverse and integrated environment for all students. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act – Subpart E and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the University ensures accessibility to its programs, services and activities for qualified students with documented disabilities. For more information, contact the Student Disability Services Office: AD 105; (210) 829-3997

**Academic Integrity**

The University expects its students to pursue and maintain truth, honesty, and personal integrity in their academic work. Academic dishonesty, in any form, constitutes a serious threat to the freedoms which define an academic community. Forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, counterfeit work, falsification of academic record, unauthorized reuse of work, theft, collusion. See the student handbook for definitions and procedures for investigation of claims of academic dishonesty.

**Approval date:** Dec. 1996

## Fundamentals of Directing

THAR 43301.1  
Spring 2020  
MW 12:00-13:15  
CRN 70860

## Dr. David McTier, Instructor

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Office Hours: MW 10-12, 2-3

### COURSE OUTLINE

#### Grading

Grading for this course is based on a 1000-point scale with final course grade configured as follows:  
930-1000 points = A, 900-929 = A-, 870-899 = B+, 830-869 = B-, and so forth.

#### Graded Components

|         |   |                     |                              |
|---------|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 25 pts  | Writing: Qualities of a Director        | Due: Jan 15 (Wed)   | beginning of class           |
| 75 pts  | Writing: Fabel (Case Study)             | Due: Feb. 3 (Mon)   | beginning of class           |
| 75 pts  | Drawings: Groundplan (Case Study)       | Due: Feb. 12 (Wed)  | beginning of class           |
| 25 pts  | Drawings: Compositions                  | Due: Feb. 26 (Wed)  | beginning of class           |
| 50 pts  | Writing: Proposed Play Abstract         | Due: March 2 (Mon)  | beginning of class           |
| 75 pts  | List: Textual & Contextual Problems     | Due: March 18 (Wed) | beginning of class           |
| 100 pts | Treatment #1: Interpretation & Approach | Due: March 25 (Wed) | beginning of class           |
| 75 pts  | Treatment #2: Character Analyses        | Due: April 1 (Wed)  | beginning of class           |
| 75 pts  | Treatment #3: Staging Plans             | Due: April 8 (Wed)  | beginning of class           |
| 50 pts  | Treatment #4: Rehearsal Schedules       | Due: April 15 (Wed) | beginning of class           |
| 50 pts  | Treatment #5: Revised Staging Plans     | Due: April 29 (Wed) | beginning of class           |
| 100 pts | Performance: Directing Final Scene      | Due: May 6 (Wed)    | TBD: mid-day or evening      |
| 50 pts  | Performance: Acting in a Final Scene    | Due: May 6 (Wed)    | TBD: mid-day or evening      |
| 75 pts  | Self-Assessment: Finals Scene           | Due: May 8 (Fri)    | 12:00 noon in Theatre Office |
| 100 pts | 25 Best Daily Grades (4 pts each)       | Every Class         | First 5 minutes of class     |

#### Components Defined

As a class, we will employ two scripts as our **case studies**: Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* and Stephen Belber's *Tape*.

**Guidelines** as well as **grading rubric** for each graded component will be provided on Blackboard no less than one week before the component is due.

The five "**treatments**" (350 points total) will comprise your Directorial Treatment Book, which in turn will become part of your Senior Studio materials and grade.

Your **performance** will be a public showcase of your final scene. Later in the semester, we will select your final scene and determine if the public performance occurs during our mid-day final exam period or later that evening. You are required to **direct** one scene (100 points) and **act** in one scene (50 points) other than your own.

Your “**daily grade**” will occur during the first 5 minutes of every class. Each daily grade results from a short quiz worth 4 points based on assigned reading and/or the previous class. Anticipating 27-28 total classes, I will count only your best 25 daily grades totaling 100 points, which effectively allows you 2 classes to be late or absent. If you are late, you will miss that day’s points.

### **Missing and Late Work**

If I determine that work is missing/late due to legitimate reason, I will allow you to submit the work at the next class with a 10% penalty. If not legitimate and submitted by the next class, then those points are lost.

### **Responsibility**

If you want to be a director, you have to be physically and mentally present, consistently on time, and accountable for everything you do and say. More so than any class I will teach at UIW, you must be present, on time, and do your work when it is due. Slackers do not become directors, and coasters do not become effective directors. It also helps immensely to be pleasant, respectful, and positive in all of your dealings with everyone else.

### **Course Materials**

- *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell
- *Tape* by Stephen Belber
- *Play Directing* by Francis Hodge
- *A Sense of Direction* by William Ball
- *Backwards and Forwards* by David Ball
- *The Essential Theatre* by Oscar Brockett and Robert Ball

All assigned readings and case study scripts are posted as pdfs on Blackboard. If you find these pdfs difficult to read, then you should buy a hard copy, hopefully in the form of a less expensive, used copy.

### **Format & Writing**

Everything you submit in this class should be in Times New Roman font with 11 points. Your writing should be correct in both content and mechanics. Failure to do so will result in grade penalties.

### **Accommodations**

University policies covering learning disabilities, pregnancy, religious observance, and Title IX are posted on Blackboard.

## THAR 4331: FUNDAMENTALS OF DIRECTING

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

|     |    |     |   |   |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|
| JAN | 13 | MON | Syllabus; What is a Director?               | Emergence Handout   |
|     | 15 | WED | Historical Context/ <i>Trifles</i> In-Class | 25 <b>ASSIGNMENT: Qualities of Directors</b>                          |
|     | 20 | MON | <i>MLK Day (No Class)</i>                   |   |
|     | 22 | WED | Types of Directors                          | READ: Essential: Directing  |
|     | 27 | MON | Discuss <i>Tape</i>                         | READ: <i>Tape</i>   |
|     | 29 | WED | The Play: Structure and Action              | READ: Essential: The Play   |
| FEB | 3  | MON | Fabels & Synopses                           | 75 <b>ASSIGNMENT: Fabel</b>   |
|     | 5  | WED | Discuss <i>Backwards and Forwards</i>       | READ: <i>Backwards and Forwards</i> (8-43)                            |
|     | 10 | MON | Explore Groundplans                         | READ: Hodge: Groundplan   |
|     | 12 | WED | Share Groundplans                           | 75 <b>ASSIGNMENT: Groundplan</b>                                      |
|     | 17 | MON | Explore Composition/Picturization           | READ: Hodge: Composition  |
|     | 19 | WED | Blocking Exercises                          | READ: Hodge: Picturization  |
|     | 24 | MON | In-Class Work on Compositions               | Class Proctored: Sign-in on time                                      |
|     | 26 | WED | Present Compositions                        | 25 <b>ASSIGNMENT: Composition Graphics</b>                            |
| MAR | 2  | MON | Discuss and Assign Final Scenes             | 50 <b>ASSIGNMENT: Proposed Play Abstract</b>                          |
|     | 4  | WED | Buffer                                      |   |
|     | 16 | MON | Problems Approach                           | Problems Handout  |
|     | 18 | WED | Share Problems List                         | 75 <b>ASSIGNMENT: Problems: Text &amp; Context</b>                    |
|     | 23 | MON | Explore Types of Auditions                  | READ: <i>Sense</i> (93-121) Rehearsal Process                         |
|     | 25 | WED | Share Interpretation & Approach             | 100 <b>Treatment: Interpretation &amp; Approach</b>                   |
|     | 30 | MON | Contrasting <i>Hamlets</i>                  | READ: <i>Hamlet</i> Synopsis/Handout                                  |
| APR | 1  | WED | Share Character Analyses                    | 75 <b>Treatment: Brief Character Analyses</b>                         |
|     | 6  | MON | Different Directions: <i>Indecent</i>       | READ: Opening of <i>Indecent</i>                                      |
|     | 8  | WED | Share Staging Plans                         | 75 <b>Treatment: Staging Plans</b>                                    |
|     | 13 | MON | <i>Easter Monday (No Class)</i>             |   |
|     | 15 | WED | Share Rehearsal Schedules                   | 50 <b>Treatment: Rehearsal Schedules</b>                              |
|     | 20 | MON | Different Directions: Postmodernism         | READ: <i>Hamletmachine</i>  |
|     | 22 | WED | Directing Musical Theatre                   | READ: (Handout)   |
|     | 27 | MON | Buffer                                      | TBD   |
|     | 29 | WED | Share Revised Plans                         | 50 <b>Treatment: Revised Staging Plans</b>                            |
| MAY | 6  | WED | Final Exam Period (10:45-12:45)             | 150 <b>Public Showcase of Scenes</b> (TBD)                            |
|     | 8  | FRI | by 12:00 noon                               | 75 <b>Self-Assessment of Showcase</b><br>100 points from Daily Grades |