

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
THEA 5305.002 MUSICAL THEATER DIRECTION
GRADUATE SECTION**

SPRING 2015
Monday through Friday
6:30pm-10:00pm
Marshall Auditorium

Bret Scott, Asst. Professor
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Regular Office Hours:
TBD, walk-in basis
All others by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The musical – that peculiarly American form – is a unique beast, from the director’s point of view. While all theater is a collaborative exercise, the musical is perhaps the most collaborative of forms, leadership-wise. Unlike a straight play, the director must share authority with a music director. But unlike an opera, the music director isn’t all-powerful. There exists, therefore, a kind of tension in the decision-making dynamic of music theater.

In this class, we’ll explore the three major stages of the directing process – preproduction, rehearsal, and dress/tech/opening. The entirety of the class will be spent in the production of Stephen Sondheim’s *SWEENEY TODD, THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET*. The expectation is that you will be present for every rehearsal and production meeting, to see both the acting and technical elements come together over the rehearsal period.

You will be responsible for maintaining the performance and focus of the ensemble in large-company scenes, similar to the structure employed on movie sets. While the director is occupied with star talent, Assistant Directors (ADs) wrangle and direct the extras.

A word about *vision*. The one thing, above all, that a director must have and share is *vision*. The best directors inspire the artists around them to bring the best of their talents and abilities to bear on a singular story and concept – the vision for the show/movie. Dictators and puppet masters get what they demand – usually a hanging in the public square when things start to go wrong. Lead and inspire your collaborators. Ask them to improve upon the vision you present. When you engage the collective imaginations of all the artists in your company, you’ll achieve far more than you might have alone.

PREREQUISITES

None.

Program Learning Outcomes

1) Knowledge of eras and contributions made throughout Theatre History and Musical Theatre History.

Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in Acting/Directing will demonstrate:

- 2) The ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance the ability to analyze a script.
- 3) The ability to work creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a laboratory theatrical production.
- 4) The ability to apply standard requirements to all aspects of technical production.

Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in technical/design will demonstrate:

- 5) The ability to apply all approaches to the theatrical design and rendering of the design.
- 6) The ability to address all technical aspects of a theatrical production.

Additionally, the student will be able to:

- 7) Describe the theater process and compose a functional definition of the theatre event.
- 8) Describe the close link between theatre and religion.
- 9) Name the basic responsibilities and roles of the playwright, director, actor, and designer in the theatre production
- 10) Have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic, and absurdist theater.
- 11) Describe the uniqueness of the theatre art.
- 12) Understand and describe the elements necessary to bring about a unified production.
- 13) Identify a variety of theater spaces.
- 14) Know the names and works associated with key figures in the theatre.
- 15) Demonstrate their understanding of acting, directing, playwriting, or design in the areas of set, sound, or makeup.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of directing-related terminology
- Analyze and identify the major elements of a preproduction, concept, and design, and explain their function and importance
- Demonstrate proficiency in blocking and staging large groups

- Articulate the functions of the various departments of a theatrical company and their respective responsibilities. Additionally, diagnose and critique each department's performance of its respective function.
- Evaluate design, blocking, staging, and performance of the company with regards to rehearsal and performance, including consistency and growth on a performance-to-performance measure.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Terminology / Definitions Quiz
- 2) Mid-Term Paper – sound design analysis of a show, film or game
- 3) Live Sound Editing Project
- 4) Scene analysis presentation
- 5) Live sound board operation – *Sweeney Todd*

Required Textbooks for this class:

SOUND FOR TELEVISION and FILM, Tomlinson Holman

Materials Required:

Minimum 8gb flash drive, formatted for Macintosh

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

these dates and assignments are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments
1	Jan 20	Syllabus, Class expectations, and Reading Assignment
2	Jan 26	Review Holman chapters 1+2, assign design concepts
3	Feb 2	Review Holman chapters 3+4, review design concepts
4	Feb 9	Review Holman chapters 5+6, begin pulling sounds
5	Feb 16	Pro Tools introduction
6	Feb 23	Edit sound FX for <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
7	Mar 2	Edit sound FX for <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
8	Mar 9	Test sound FX during rehearsal – <i>Sweeney Todd</i> Sound Design Analysis paper due
9	Mar 16	SPRING BREAK
10	Mar 23	Fundamentals of Live Sound/ Run <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
11	Mar 30	Fundamentals of Live Sound / Run <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
12	Apr 6	Research Week for Scene Analysis
13	Apr 13	Review draft sound design – scene analysis
14	Apr 20	Scene analysis presentation due
15	Apr 27	Prep for additional projects / building a sound library
16	May 4	Contingency / TBD

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

• Terminology Quiz	10%
• Preproduction paper	15%
• Rehearsal process	30%
• Written post-mortem – Sweeney Todd	15%
• Prompt book on show of choice	30%

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

LATE PAPERS

Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

If you discover, *a week or more in advance*, that you have multiple deadlines converging on the same day, you may request a change in deadline. Such a change may be granted at the instructor's discretion. Once the deadline has passed, it's too late to ask for exceptions. Manage your time and deadlines wisely.

TARDINESS / ABSENCE POLICY

Attendance is 5% of your grade. That can mean the difference between an "A" and a "B" ...or an "F" and a "D."

TARDINESS

Class **BEGINS EXACTLY AT THE APPOINTED TIME**. It is your responsibility to be prepared to begin **BEFORE** the class starts.

Three instances of tardiness is equivalent to one absence. See below for the class absence policy.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PRESENT AT THE START OF CLASS* – ON THE HOUR. PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ON-TIME is EARLY!

*Exceptions will be made only for those with classes located in RAS whose end time makes on-time arrival impossible.

Punctuality is essential in this business. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.