

## SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY THEA 4304-001 DIRECTING II

Spring 2022  
Tues/Thurs  
12:30 – 1:45 pm  
Zuzu Amphitheatre or Studio  
Theatre

Marjorie Scott, Associate Prof. of Comm.  
& Theatre  
Chair, Department of Fine Arts  
p. 432-837-8039  
m. 432-294-1191  
Office: FAB 106  
[mscott3@sulross.edu](mailto:mscott3@sulross.edu)  
Ofc hours M/W 10 – 11 am T/TH 2 -3 pm

### Course Description

---

This class is the second half of a one-year study in directing for the stage. Students will select, analyze, and score scripts in preparation for rehearsal and production in addition to getting practical experience in auditioning, casting, scheduling rehearsals, blocking, guiding actors through performance, diagnosing problems, and directing 10-minute scenes to be performed for a live audience.

To you, the student: The skills you learn in this class are intended to help you effectively lead a team of artists in creating a theatrical production. These skills will prove useful in other positions of leadership. I look forward to working with each of you as you continue to develop your craft.

### Required Text *(available at Amazon)*

---

- 1) Clurman, Harold, *On Directing*. 1997, Fireside
- 2) Other readings provided by instructor

### Materials Required

---

- 1) A working e-mail account. **You are required to check your Sul Ross email account regularly.**
- 2) A working Blackboard account.
- 3) The Zoom app (for the first week or two)
- 4) Writing utensil and paper for notetaking
- 5) A tablet or computer to view required video content. Viewing the content on smart phones not recommended.
- 6) Access to Digital Theatre+ (may be accessed through the SRSU library)

### MARKETABLE SKILLS

---

Strong oral and written communication skills.

Strong analytical skills.

Strong teamwork and collaboration skills

Through a combination of coursework and laboratory work, i.e., theatrical productions, our students will gain the opportunity to explore and develop all three marketable skills. Specifically, students will learn how to analyze scripts, and communicate their findings via written assignments. They will also be encouraged to support their analysis orally through classroom discussion and their Comprehensive Oral Exam at the end of the senior year. Theatrical productions will provide the opportunity for actors and technicians to problem solve and work collaboratively, developing strong teamwork skills.

### **Student Learning Outcomes** *The graduating student will demonstrate:*

---

1. knowledge of the various theatrical genres, styles, and works made throughout theatre history;
2. the ability to analyze scripts;
3. the ability to analyze all technical aspects of a theatrical production;
4. describe the theatre process and compose a functional definition for the theatre event;
5. name the basic responsibilities and roles of the playwright, director, actor and designer in the theatre production;
6. have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic and absurdist theatre and be able to apply them to productions;
7. describe the uniqueness of the theatre art;
8. understand and describe the elements necessary to bring about a unified production;
9. identify a variety of theatre spaces; and
10. know the names and works associated with key figures (playwrights, directors, designers, performers) in the theatre

### **Course Objectives**

---

- Articulate a working vocabulary of directing techniques
- Demonstrate intermediate-level mastery of script analysis
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of blocking and staging
- Develop beginner-level mastery of directing actors in a believable and dynamic scene.
- Demonstrate beginner-level mastery of diagnosing problems in performance and determining potential solutions
- Demonstrate understanding the function of design elements in delineating dramatic action.

## Course Requirements

---

**Attendance & Participation:** I expect you to come to class and to participate fully. This includes participation in discussion and analysis as well as classroom activities. After two (2) unexcused absences, your overall course grade will go down by one full letter grade for each unexcused absence.

The following is the Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2020 - 2022 Course Catalogue:

*“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 instructor will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine (9) 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.”*

**Excused Absences:** Excused absences from class include: a university event for which you are required to attend, religious holidays, an illness (a doctor's note must be submitted to the instructor), a death in the family (an obituary or funeral program must be submitted), or court dates (an official notice from the court must be submitted). If you miss a project deadline or presentation due to illness you must provide written documentation from the Health Center (or an outside health care provider), verifying dates of treatment and the time period during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities. All other absences will be marked as unexcused.

**Assigned Reading:** Directors read lots of plays and books about plays and books about directing, so get used to reading **a lot**. All assigned reading for this class is required. The readings are intended to expand your knowledge and skills, so give yourself a gift and do the reading.

**Script Analysis/Directing Practice:** We will read, analyze, and direct scenes from several plays throughout the semester, including short plays *The Fever* *Chart Vision One: State of Innocence* by Naomi Wallace and *Man in a Case* by Wendy Wasserstein. Full length plays include *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage and *Hay Fever* by Noel Coward. All scripts will be provided by instructor.

**Viewing:** You are required to view two different productions of Henrik's Ibsen's *A Doll's House* available on Digital Theatre+. Write a 3-page paper (typed, double-spaced) detailing similarities and differences you observe in the direction of the two shows.

Discuss in your paper stage configuration and overall use of space, blocking, acting style and quality, design elements (set, lighting, costumes, props, sound), pace, and overall look and feel of each production. **Papers are due in class or via email on Thursday, February 24 by end of day.**

**Picturization Presentations:** Each student will prepare and present two picturization (staging/blocking) pieces – the first one based on a theme chosen at random and the second from a scripted scene provided by the instructor. Each picturization should be 3-5 minutes in length. The goal of this assignment is for students to practice telling stories through stage pictures and blocking. You are to tell a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end and with a clear protagonist.

For the first picturization you will select the theme of the story out of a hat (or a bowl). You are required to use all three of your fellow classmates at one point in your picturization. Think in terms of expressive movement and imagery rather than literal. No pantomiming please.

For the second picturization, students will be given a scene from *Man in a Case* or *Fever Chart* or *Sweat* and must block the arc of change across the scene, showing a clear beginning, middle, and end. Tell a story through the movement and shape of the actors and their relationship to the space around them. You will also use props and set pieces as needed. Think about color and texture as well as shape and movement. **This picturization will count as the midterm for this course.**

**Supporting written analysis for midterm:** The following deliverables are due in class on **Tuesday, March 15:**

- 1) A copy of your scored scene with beats and actions identified. Give the scene a title-- think of the title as the major action of the scene.
- 2) A 2-page typed, double-spaced paper explaining how you determined the shape and movement of the scene and developed your picturization. Include any challenges you faced and what you did to overcome them.
- 3) Ten images that depict design elements (set, lighting, costume, props) and/or feel like the scene. You may use photos, drawings, sketches, paintings, color swatches, and any other image that expresses the look, mood, and feel of the scene.
- 4) A diagram of the rhythm of the scene. This is about pacing – at which points does the pace of the scene speed up and at which points does it slow down? For each change, briefly explain what causes the shift in rhythm.

**Directing Practice:** In this class you will have the opportunity to practice your directing skills through in-class scenes and blocking exercises. I strongly and compassionately encourage you to take risks. Dare to do your best and to make mistakes. My hope is that you'll learn to diagnose and solve problems in a scene. I hope you will learn to talk with actors and collaborate with them in a positive and productive way. Each actor is an individual with a unique heart and brain and should be treated accordingly. You will practice giving notes to actors – there is an art to it. Rome wasn't built in a day and this same concept applies to directing actors. One thing at a time, or you may overwhelm or discourage your actors. Practice kindness and empathy. When we direct, we share intimate and important stories about the human experience all while in collaborating with other artists. What a gift! We must handle each other with care.

**Audition:** We, as a class, will host auditions for the directing finals. The auditions will be held in **Marshall Auditorium on Tuesday, March 29 at 6:00 pm**. The goal of this audition is to provide you with practical experience in the casting process.

**Finals Rehearsal:** We will have a dress rehearsal on Thursday, April 28 from 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm. Clear your schedules.

**Final Scene: Final Scene:** Your final project for this class is to direct a 10-minute scene from a full-length play from a list of instructor-approved plays. I recommend rehearsing with your actors for 4 weeks, at least 3 times a week. **Each director must arrange a visit from the instructor to at least one rehearsal.** You are free to use any actors you wish but try to use students first. All actors need to be available and present for rehearsals (including Thursday, April 28) and for the final performances on **Friday, April 29 and Saturday, April 30, both at 7:30 pm**.

**Additionally, submit the following written work:**

- 1) A packet or binder of your inspiration and ideas for lighting, sound, costumes, and set designs. Include images, colors, textures, playlists, anything that expresses the mood, tone, period, feel, and look of the play. You do not have to be literal in your depictions. Please include at least 10 images total but more is great!
- 2) A written analysis of the entire play, including the following: A) What is the play about? B) What is the socio-political and historical context in which it was written? C) Why is this play relevant now? D) How do your design choices support the idea of the play? E) What kind of stage configuration(s) do you think would work well for this play? And why? F) How did you make your casting choices?
- 3) Pre-production and rehearsal notes (may be hand-written or typed)
- 4) A copy of your selected scene scored for beats, actions, and a scene title.
- 5) A 3-page reflection paper detailing the challenges you faced directing the scene and how you handled those challenges. Did you overcome them, or not? Explain in detail. What did you learn about yourself as a director? What would you like to

work on in your directing craft going forward? Be as detailed and specific as possible.

- 6) What kinds of stories inspire and excite you? What plays (or types of plays) might you like to direct in the future?

**Casting:** While SR theatre students should be given first dibs on the roles in your final scenes, you are free to use any actors who are available for ALL rehearsals and for the final performance.

**Late Work:** We all get behind or overwhelmed sometimes. If you anticipate being late on an assignment, please inform me before the assignment due date. I am less inclined to help you if you wait to contact me until after the deadline has passed. I urge you all to take charge of your schedule and assignments early in the semester, and plan accordingly.

**Academic Integrity:** The University has a Code of Academic Integrity, which prohibits, among other things, cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers or portions of papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, forging signatures, and using unauthorized study aids (including old quizzes and exams). This class abides by that code.

## **Grading**

---

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Viewing and Analysis Paper	15%
2) Picturization #1(thematic)	10%
3) Picturization #2 (midterm)	20%
4) Final Scene (Written)	10%
5) Final Scene (Performance)	20%
6) Auditions for final	10%
7) In-Class Exercises/Participation	15%

### **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. High level of scholarship.

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

D = Below Average. 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.

## **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 Mary Schwartz or Erzulie Clarke in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: [432-837-8203](tel:432-837-8203). E-mail: [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu) or [erzulie.clarke@sulross.edu](mailto:erzulie.clarke@sulross.edu).

## Class Dates: Assignments and Deadlines

*Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion*

DAY	DATE	IN-CLASS TOPICS/EXERCISES	READING/ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS
Tues	Jan 11	Review syllabus and expected outcomes.	Discussion: What is the role of the director? What is your
Thurs	Jan 13	No class meeting – Read plays	
Tues	Jan 18	Discuss <i>Man in a Case</i> and <i>The Fever Chart: Vision One State of Innocence</i>  Assign research	<b>*Reading due:</b> <i>Man in a Case</i> by Wendy Wasserstein and <i>The Fever Chart: Vision One State of Innocence</i> by Naomi Wallace <b>*Read both plays</b>
Thurs	Jan 20	Continue discussion of <i>Man in a Case</i> and <i>The Fever Chart</i>  Share and discuss research Assign more research	
Tues	Jan 25	Continue discussion of <i>Man in a Case</i> and <i>The Fever Chart</i>  Share and discuss research	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>On Directing</i> (Clurman), Chapters 1-3
Thurs	Jan 27	Continue discussion of <i>Man in a Case</i> and <i>The Fever Chart</i>	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>On Directing</i> (Clurman), Chapters 5 & 6
Tues	Feb 1	Direct scenes from <i>The Fever Chart: Vision One State of Innocence</i> and <i>Man in a Case</i>	Reading due: <i>On Directing</i> (Clurman), Chapter 7
Thurs	Feb 3	Direct scenes from <i>The Fever Chart: Vision One State of Innocence</i> and <i>Man in a Case</i>	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>On Directing</i> (Clurman), Chapter 7 & 12
Tues	Feb 8	<b>Picturization #1</b>	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>On Directing</i> (Clurman), Chapter 8
Thurs	Feb 10	<b>Picturization #1 (continued)</b>	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>On Directing</i> (Clurman), Chapters 9



Tues	Feb 15	Discuss <i>Sweat</i> by Lynn Nottage Assign research	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>Sweat</i> by Lynn Nottage
Thurs	Feb 17	Discuss <i>Sweat</i> Share and discuss research	
Tues	Feb 22	Discuss <i>Sweat</i> Share and discuss research	
Thurs	Feb 24	Discuss <i>Sweat</i> Share and discuss research	<b>DUE:</b> Viewing and analysis paper to prof via email by 12:00 pm (noon)
Tues	March 1	Direct scenes from <i>Sweat</i>	
Thurs	March 3	Direct scenes from <i>Sweat</i>	
Tues	March 8	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Thurs	March 10	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Tues	March 15	<b>Midterm: Picturizations #2</b>	
Thurs	March 17	<b>Midterm: Picturizations #2 (continued)</b>	
Tues	March 22	Audition Process/Casting	<b>DUE:</b> play selection for final to prof via email by 12:00 pm (noon)
Thurs	March 24	Audition Process/Casting (continued)	<b>DUE:</b> Sides for auditions to prof via email by 12:00 pm (noon)
Tues	March 29	Collaborating with Designers	
Thurs	March 31	Audition post-mortem and discussion of final performance	
Tues	April 5	Discuss <i>Hay Fever</i>	<b>Reading due:</b> <i>Hay Fever</i>
Thurs	April 7	Discuss <i>Hay Fever</i>	
Tues	April 12	Discuss <i>Hay Fever</i>	
Thurs	April 14	Direct scene from <i>Hay Fever</i>	
Tues	April 19	Direct scene from <i>Hay Fever</i>	
Thurs	April 21	Direct scene from <i>Hay Fever</i>	
Tues	April 26	Direct scene from <i>Hay Fever</i>	

Thurs	April 28	DEAD DAY – Dress rehearsal for scenes 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm	
Friday	April 29	7:30 pm Performance of Scenes	
Saturday	April 30	7:30 pm Performance of Scenes	
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>Wednesday, May 4 10:15 am – 12:15 pm – Postmortem discussion and written materials due. May the 4<sup>th</sup> be with you.</b>		