

## SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY THEA 3318-001 DIRECTING I

Fall 2023  
Tues/Thurs  
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm  
Studio Theatre (FAB 105)  
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 11 am – 12 pm  
All other times by appointment

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### Course Description

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This is an introductory course in directing for the stage. Students will practice script analysis, direct actors in scene work, and learn to develop the necessary skills for collaborating with designers. The skills and techniques developed in this class are intended to help students effectively lead a team of fellow artists in the process of directing a theatrical production.

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

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- 1) Clurman, Harold, *On Directing*, 1997, Fireside
- 2) Mitchell, Katie, *The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre*, 2009, Routledge
- 3) Hauser, Frank and Reich, Russell, *Notes on Directing*, 2018, RCR Creative Press

### Materials Required

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- 1) A working e-mail account. **You are required to check your Sul Ross email account regularly.**
- 2) A working Blackboard account.
- 3) Notebook, pen, *and* pencil for writing notes. Please bring these items to every class.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES *The graduating student will demonstrate:*

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**SLO 1** Students will develop the ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance and/or design.

**SLO 2** The student will develop the ability to employ analytical and critical thinking skills through directing, playwriting, theatre history and script analysis. They will work creatively and concretely with actors and technicians in mounting laboratory theatrical productions.

**SLO 3** The student will demonstrate and apply standard industry practices to all aspects of production.

## **Course Objectives**

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- Demonstrate intermediate-level mastery of script analysis.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of blocking and staging.
- Develop beginner-level mastery of collaborating with actors.
- Articulate the relationships between directors and designers.

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

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**Attendance & Participation:** Your attendance and participation grade are worth a combined 20% of your overall grade. More importantly, your fellow classmates depend on you, just as you depend on them, to show up and collaborate. Theatre is an inherently collaborative art form and the first step in collaboration is showing up. Show up for yourself and show up for your collaborators.

**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 period during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities. **All other absences will be marked as unexcused.**

**Cell phones, texting, and engaging in activities unrelated to class are all strictly prohibited. If you choose to engage in such activities, you may be asked to leave the class and you will be marked as absent.**

**Assigned Reading:** Directors read. A lot. The assigned readings are required. Do the reading.

**Script Analysis:** You will analyze two plays this term: *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov, and a script of your choosing for the final (a list of approved plays will be provided by the instructor).

**Picturization Presentations:** You will direct and present in class two picturization exercises this semester. These picturizations are intended to help you tell (or "show") a story through stage pictures. You are allowed to use sound in both picturizations and minimal spoken language in the second picturization ONLY. The shape, movement, and rhythm are essential to directing a piece of theatre.

**Audition:** As a class, you will hold auditions for the Directing Finals. These auditions will be either in the afternoon or evening on a day agreed upon by all members of this course. The experience of auditioning actors is invaluable, even if you don't wish to pursue director.

**Directing Finals:** Your final for this class is to direct a 6-10-minute scene from a full-length play selected from a list of approved plays provided by the instructor. You must rehearse with your actors for a **minimum of 4 weeks**. I recommend rehearsing at least 3 times a week for 40 – 60 minutes each time. You are free to use any actors you wish, but they must be available for **all rehearsals and both performances (Dec 8 and 9)**.

**Supplemental requirements include the following:**

- A ground plan for your set (all set pieces and entrances/exits and windows)
- Written description with images (can be a collage or a book of images) of your ideas for lighting, sound, costumes (including makeup if applicable), and props for your scene.
- A director's concept statement. This statement must include your analysis of the entire play. Your design concepts must focus specifically on your selected scene, but you must write about it in the context of the entire play.
- A copy of your rehearsal notes. This may be handwritten, or you may type up your handwritten notes to submit.
- A 2-page reflection paper detailing your directing experience.

**Directors must arrange a visit from the instructor to at least one rehearsal.**

**Format:** All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and written in 12-point Times New Roman or comparable font.

**Time Management:** Do your best to submit assignments on time. Consider your other commitments and do your best to manage your time appropriately. If you find yourself struggling to meet a deadline, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

**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**

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Assignments are valued as follows:

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| 1) Attendance & Participation            | 20% |
| 2) Audition for Directing Finals         | 15% |
| 3) <i>The Seagull</i> Director's Concept | 10% |

4) Picturizations (2)	20%
5) Final Scene with supporting materials	35%

### **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**

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SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

## Class Dates: Assignments and Deadlines

*Note the following dates and details are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.*

Day	Date	In-Class Topics/Exercises	Reading/Assignment Due by class time
Tues	Aug 29	Review syllabus and expected outcomes.	
Thurs	Aug 31	Start Reading " <i>The Seagull</i> "	
Tues	Sep 5	Continue reading " <i>The Seagull</i> "	Clurman, Chapters 1-2
Thurs	Sep 7	Continue reading "The Seagull"	Clurman, Chapters 3 Mitchell, Chapter 1
Tues	Sep 12	Director's Concept Statement	Mitchell, Chapter 2
Thurs	Sep 14	More on the text	Mitchell, Chapters 3 - 4
Tues	Sep 19	Character analysis and action of the script	Mitchell, Chapter 5 Clurman, Chapters 5
Thurs	Sep 21	Picturization Presentation #1	
Tues	Sep 26	Picturization Presentations #1	
Thurs	Sep 2	Picturization Presentations #1	
Tues	Oct 3	Picturizations de-brief Begin discussion of casting	Clurman, Chapter 6 (Casting) Mitchell, Chapter 7 (Casting)
Thurs	Oct 5	Casting (continued)	<i>Assignment Due: "The Seagull"</i> Director's Concept Statement
Tues	Oct 10	Preparing for Rehearsals	Mitchell, Chapter 8 Clurman, Chapters 7
Thurs	Oct 12	Early Rehearsals	Mitchell, Chapter 9 Clurman, Chapter 8
Tues	Oct 17	Rehearsals	Clurman, Chapter 9 Mitchell, Chapter 10
Thurs	Oct 19	<b>TBD</b>	
Tues	Oct 24	Rehearsals	Clurman, Chapter 10 Mitchell, Chapter 11

Thurs	Oct 26	Rehearsals	<b>Assignment Due: Submit your scene selection for Directing Finals. Submit one copy of entire scene with clearly marked beginning and end points.</b>
Tues	Oct 31	Picturization Presentation #2	
Thurs	Nov 2	Picturization Presentation #2	
Tues	Nov 7	Picturization Presentation #2	
Thurs	Nov 9	Designer Relationships	Mitchell, Chapter 6
Tues	Nov 14	Designer Relationships (continued)	<b>Assignments Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Director's Concept Statement for final</li> <li>- Ground plan for final project</li> </ul>
Thurs	Nov 16	Technical and Dress Rehearsals	Mitchell, Chapter 12
Tues	Nov 21	The Audience	Clurman, Chapter 13
Thurs	Nov 23	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
Tues	Nov 28	Performances and Notes	Mitchell, Chapter 13
Thurs	Nov 30	Performances and Notes (continued)	<b>Assignment Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design book for final</li> </ul>
Tues	Dec 5	Discuss Directing Finals plan	
Thurs	Dec 7	<b>No class meeting - Dead Day</b>	Dress/Tech rehearsal for Directing Finals from 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm in Studio Theatre. Attendance required.
Fri	Dec 8	<b>Directing Finals in Studio Theatre at 7:30 pm. Call-time is 6:00 pm.</b>	Plan to give your actors notes after the first performance.
Sat	Dec 9	<b>Directing Finals in Studio Theatre at 7:30 pm. Call is 6 pm</b>	Final Performance!!
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Discuss Directing Finals. Copy of rehearsal notes and reflection paper due.</b>		