EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
THEATRE
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Theatre
FA / THEA 4485 3.0 SECTION A
ASPECTS OF DIRECTING
FALL 2020 / WINTER 2021
Last Modified Date: 08/17/2020

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Provides an Investigation and application of the fundamental and intermediate principles of directing for the theatre. Prerequisites: FA/THEA 2410 6.00; FA/THEA 3051 3.00 or FA/THEA 3210 6.00 or FA/THEA 3290 6.00; FA/THEA 3070 3.00 or FA/THEA 3071 3.00; or by application to the department. Corequisites: FA/THEA 4070 3.00 or FA/THEA 4071 3.00. Course credit exclusion: FA/THEA 4480 6.00.

This course is a combination of theoretical grounding and practical application of basic knowledge and skills required by a theatre director. The lecture part of the course first will highlight the main historical developments in directing. Secondly, there will be a focus on two types of theatre direction - interpretative and conceptual. In the former, the students will learn the fundamentals of 'serving the play': text analysis, the methodology of production and vocabulary necessary for work with the rest of the creative team i.e. playwright, actor, designer, dramaturg. Students will examine the work of famous interpretative directors such as Konstantin Stanislavsky, Granville Barker, Harold Clurman, Elia Kazan and Tyrone Guthrie. Conceptual direction will be looked at in terms of original creation, adaptation, deconstruction, re-construction, performance art, guerilla theatre, the collective, and legislative theatre. The work of established conceptual directors such as Jerzy Grotowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Peter Brook, Gilles Maheu, Robert Lepage, Robert Wilson and JoAnne Akalitis will be examined. The practical component of this course will require students to do research, write critical essays and interpretative and conceptual 'treatments' and present visual sources as well as rehearsed scenes. Students will be required to attend all Theatre @ York productions and at least four professional productions.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robinson, Jamie</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jr2011@yorku.ca">jr2011@yorku.ca</a></td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

THEA 4485 3.0 ASPECTS OF DIRECTING FALL TERM 2020 Course Director: Jamie Robinson robinsoj@yorku.ca Location: IMPORTANT: Please note that THEA 4485 3.0 is a course that depends on remote teaching and learning. There will be no in-class interactions or activities on campus. The course will be taught synchronously, meaning we will gather together on Zoom at our scheduled meeting times of 8:30-11:30 am EST on Thursdays in the fall term. For those in radically different time zones who cannot participate during these scheduled meeting times, recordings of each class may be made available and alternate means of completing the assignments will be determined. Technical requirements for taking the course: In order to fully participate in THEA 4485, we will be using Zoom as our online platform. A stable, higher-speed Internet connection is highly recommended. There are online tests, such as Speedtest, https://www.speedtest.net/ that can be run as a way to determine your Internet connection and speed. You will be invited to attend a Zoom session with your instructor. You will receive an email with a link to a Zoom meeting. You can click on the link and you will be redirected to the Zoom meeting. If the link does not work for some reason, you can go to Zoom and input the meeting ID and password which will be visible to you in the invitation. Downloading the Zoom app may also prove very useful. In THEA 4485, it is highly recommended that laptops or tablets with a reliable built-in camera be used rather than mobile devices. If
your only option is a mobile device, then make sure that you are able to stand it up or prop it up somewhere so you can work hands free (inexpensive mini-tripods are available for this purpose). As this is an experiential course, a space where the student can sit, stand, lie down, and move (even to a limited degree) is required. At various times in class, students will be asked to be in close-up on the screen (a tight shot of the head and shoulders), medium shot (head to waist) and long shot (so the whole body can be seen). What will also prove useful is having a solid base to elevate the laptop/tablet/mobile device to the level of the eye line when sitting, standing or moving; this can be created using boxes or large books on a small table, the top of a dresser, or even situating the device on a shelf. 2. Natural light is good. Be sure your face is facing the light from the window. Also you may need to adjust the brightness of your camera. If you click on your camera app and go into settings you can adjust the brightness. If the lighting is bad or dull, take an ordinary desk lamp and point it at yourself from a distance. It’s amazing what kinds of resources we have right at home. If you have trouble with accessing the internet or a device, or only have access at certain times please inform your instructor as soon as possible. If you are not familiar with Zoom, experiment with the features on this platform prior to the first day of class. Useful links describing computing information, resources and help for students: Student Guide to Moodle https://thehelp.yorku.ca/student-guide-to-moodle Computing for Students Website https://student.computing.yorku.ca/ Student Guide to eLearning at York University http://elearning-guide.apps01.yorku.ca/ Learning Skills Services https://lss.info.yorku.ca/online-learning/ Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide
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https://staff.computing.yorku.ca/wcontent/uploads/sites/3/2020/03/Zoom@YorkUBest-PracticesV2.pdf


PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS: - Please read Anton Chekhov’s The Seagull, any translation/edition. - Please read the 4 provided short plays by Suzan-Lori Parks (accessed via Moodle) and choose one to prepare, using the Scene Analysis guidelines provided in the assignment section below. To be submitted in class 1. CLASS ONE September 10 Hand in Scene Analysis (5%). Introduction: Discussion of Course Outline, Objectives, Directing Exercises. *Casting assignment of your short play due next class. *Read RIOT and REZ SISTERS and submit two scenes you would like to direct by class 2. *Begin contacting potential casts. *Read chapters 1-3 of Katie Mitchell’s, The Director’s Craft. *Begin searching for a live online performance. Written Theatre response is due class 6, October 22nd. *Begin searching for a Research class/seminar. Presentations due classes 7, 8, 9 or 10. CLASS TWO September 17 Hand in and discuss casting assignment (5%). Hand in two scene option choices from either RIOT or REZ SISTERS that you would like to direct. Schedule order of groups/scenes for pass #1 in classes 4, 5, or 6. Directing Exercises. 4 Begin Katie Mitchell lists, using THE SEAGULL. *Prepare Sketchpad for assigned play, due class 5, October 8 th. *Outside of class, cast your scenes, begin read-throughs, and discuss rehearsal schedule with cast. *Rehearsal schedule to be submitted
next class. CLASS THREE September 24 Submit rehearsal schedule (partial 10%). Directing Exercises.


*Continue staging & enrichment rehearsals. Reading week Oct. 10-16. NO CLASS OCTOBER 15. CLASS SIX October 22 Submit written Theatre response (10%). GROUP C: 1st Pass of scenes “staging” (10%). Directing Exercises. Discuss Director’s Craft. *For next class, submit Directorial Challenge. *Class/seminar presentations begin next week. *Continue enrichment rehearsals. CLASS SEVEN October 29 Submit Directorial Challenge. GROUP C: class/seminar presentations (10%). Directing Exercises. *Continue enrichment rehearsals. 5 Mid-term marks worth 50% of term grade distributed. CLASS EIGHT November 5 GROUP A: 2nd Pass of scenes “enriching” (10%). GROUP B: class/seminar presentations (10%). Directing Exercises. *Continue enrichment. Begin refinement rehearsals – Off-book. November 6: Last date to drop Fall term courses without receiving a grade. CLASS NINE November 12 GROUP B: 2nd Pass of scenes “enriching” (10%). GROUP A: class/seminar presentations (10%). Directing Exercises. *Continue enrichment & refinement rehearsals CLASS TEN November 19 GROUP C; 2nd Pass of scenes “enriching” (10%). GROUP A/B: class/seminar presentations (10%). Directing Exercises. *Continue refinement rehearsals. CLASS ELEVEN November 26 HALF GROUP: Final Pass of scenes “refining” (10%). Peer feedback. *Mitchell List/Prompt Book/Premise due in final class. CLASS TWELVE December 3 Final Class. Submit Mitchell List/Prompt Book/Premise (10%). HALF GROUP: Final Pass of scenes “refining” (10%). Peer feedback. Closure discussion. December 8 York Fall Term classes end. December 9 Study Day. No Classes at York. December 10-23 York University Exam Period. 3. Learning Outcomes with Examples Course Goals and Learning Outcomes: The course will focus on contextual casting methods and collaborative interpretative direction. There will also be an introduction to conceptual directing practices. The practical component will require the casting, analysis, breakdown, direction and presentation of theatre scenes from plays explored by all participants. Students will participate in directing exercises and research, preparing and presenting scenes from a selected play, and will write critical responses to plays viewed. Although students will not be judged on their acting ability, students may be asked to act in scenes as required. Active participation in class and preparation/rehearsals outside of class are a major component of this rigorous curriculum. Students will learn the directing fundamentals of: • Serving the play. • Developing their personal directing voice. • Collaborative communication skills. • Cultural and social awareness. • The casting process. • The rehearsal process. • Research methodology. • Public presentation skills. • Online creativity and innovation. Assignments: 1. To be submitted by the first day of classes: Prior to the beginning of classes, choose one of the four provided short plays to write a Scene Analysis for (found on Moodle). You are expected to read it and come up with a context for the play, using the following guidelines (Typewritten, 12-point font or less, single-spaced, one page minimum, but organized as creatively as you wish): • What is the one central image of the play – This can be concrete or abstract (eg. A park bench, a broken heart, a corset, a punch). Use your imagination, anything goes. Explain why. • Personal response – How does this play make you feel? What makes sense, what doesn’t? What is the big question at the heart of this play? • From Uta Hagan’s Six Questions – Who are the characters? What are the given circumstances? What time is it? Where are they? What surrounds them? What are the Relationships? What does each character want? What are their objectives; overall objective, scene objective, immediate objectives? What are their obstacles? What do they do to get what they want? • Envision the world of the play – How would you stage it? • What is the tone of the play – What do you want the audience to know or feel as they watch the play and after they walk away from it? 2. DUE CLASS TWO: Cast your short play with celebrities to provide context. 3. Read two plays, Riot and The Rez Sisters, choose two scenes (4-7 pages in length, with 2-3 characters MAX), one of which will be assigned for you to direct. You will do a complete play sketchpad, analysis, breakdown and rehearsal schedule, create a prompt book and rehearse the scene outside of class as well as twice in class, culminating in a third final presentation online. 4. DUE CLASS SIX: Attend a production of a professional play (online or live, not a musical) and write a critical response (approx. 1000 words double-spaced) addressing all aspects of performance – overall vision/concept, interpretation of the playwright’s text, acting, set, costumes, lighting, sound, direction etc. Make these observations from the point of view of a director and outline what aspects you agree with/support and/or disagree with of the director’s work. Make an offer of
what you would consider doing differently and why. 7 5. DUE CLASSES 7-10: Attend an online research seminar/class of interest to your directing OR that pertains to the final script you are assigned. You will then present your discoveries to the class for 10 minutes MAX. Students will be responsible for finding their own cast and making sure the cast is available for THREE in-class rehearsal presentations (Thursdays 8:30-11:30am) during the term. In your Director’s Prompt book, you will include all your director’s work: musings, drawings, images, research, scene breakdowns, intentions, beats, obstacles, personalization work, daily schedules, analysis, etc. Please refer to the Director’s checklists in Katie Mitchell’s book as well as other materials provided by the course director throughout the term. Assignment Submission: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, written assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Late submissions will not be accepted. Lateness Penalty: Written assignments received later than the due date will receive a grade of zero. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Director but will require supporting documentation (i.e. a doctor’s letter). 4. Graded Assessment Evaluation: 1st Half of Term 50% Scene analysis 5% Casting assignment 5% Scene breakdown/schedule/sketchpad 10% 1st Pass of scene 10% Written Theatre Response 10% Participation 10% 2nd Half of Term 50% 2nd Pass of scene 10% Research class/seminar presentation 10% Mitchell List/Prompt Book/Premise 10% * Participation 10% * Final Pass of Scene 10% *(Participation criteria includes interest, commitment, effort; risk-taking, initiative, personal investment; demonstration of Theatre principles in practice and discussion; professionalism; collaborative ability; initiation of ideas; acceptance of the ideas of others; attendance/punctuality; growth) **(Performance criteria includes: evidence of rehearsal and preparation in performance and in discussion; evidence of personalization, risk-taking, dropping-in to situation and relationship; clear, compelling narrative; compelling use of space, set, costumes, props, 8 LX, and sound; originality, theatrical inventiveness, conceptual imagination; flexibility with redirects; growth; innovative use of technology) ATTENDANCE: Students are reminded that Department of Theatre rules require attendance at all classes. There is no differentiation between excused and unexcused absences - an absence is an absence and will affect your chances of success in this course. All classes and rehearsals are mandatory. Failure to attend classes or rehearsals outside of class will result in either academic penalty or a request that the student withdraw from the course. In an upper-level course with only 12 classes in the term, punctuality and attendance are staples of the curriculum and of professional etiquette. Accordingly, any student who is absent or late without prior arrangement with the course director for an excused absence or late (at the course director’s discretion) may have 2% deducted from the term grade for each unexcused late and 4% deducted from the term grade for each unexcused absence. Three lates or absences (excused or not) may result in course failure. If a student is going to be considerably late or miss a class due to illness, the student must contact the course director prior to the beginning of that class. If there are technical difficulties, the student must contact the course director as soon as possible with a detailed explanation so a swift solution may be made prior to the next class. Class Presentations: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. In the discipline of directing for the stage, absences have a profound effect on scene partners and class members. Accordingly, class presentations for this course must be performed on the due dates specified for the assignment, as indicated in the class schedule and as determined by the course director. Missed Class Presentation Penalty: Missed class presentations on the due date will be penalized with a grade of zero for the absent student. Exceptions to the missed class presentation penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Director but will require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s letter). The instructor will attempt to reschedule the missed class presentation to facilitate scene partners affected by an excuse. Due to the collaborative nature of this course, make-up assignments will not be scheduled. 5. Additional Information Last date to drop fall term courses without receiving a grade: November 6, 2020. If you have any unanswered questions or are unsure of your marks/progress during the course, please make an appointment with the course director. The responsibility is yours. Grading, Assignment Submission, Lateness Penalties and Missed Tests Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ - 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and 9 tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar http://calendars.students.yorku.ca/2018-2019/policies-and-regulations/academic-policies-and-regulations/grading-scheme-and-feedback. Note on Challenging Content: One of the central educational goals of the Theatre Department is to produce socially conscious artists—artists who are aware of and capable of participating in challenging dialogues about social injustice and inequality. This means that our courses, public events, and productions often
grapple with difficult subject matter, including sex, violence, terror, discrimination and illness (among other topics). While these presentations will no doubt provoke strong emotions and cause discomfort, we feel that the unique experiences they bring about are also essential to the development of our students’ critical faculties, empathy, and understanding of the world. Rather than warning our students in advance about every potentially uncomfortable topic that they might encounter in the course of their studies, we instead encourage students to meet them head on in the classroom, in rehearsals, and performances, and to engage in civil and compassionate debate about the possibilities and effects of staging difficult knowledge. If you require an accommodation related to your participation in Theatre experiences, please ensure that you share relevant documentation with your course director. Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.
The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms. Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles. ** York's Policy on Academic Honesty ** York's Senate Policy on Academic Honesty affirms and clarifies the general obligation for all members of the University to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. AMPD has establish complementary procedures for the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of the Senate Policy involving students in AMPD degree program courses at the undergraduate level. THE ACADEMIC HONESTY PROCESS An Overview A. Investigation 1. The person discovering the suspected violation will notify the course director. The course director should not meet with the student or discuss the case at this point. 2. The course director will notify his or her department Chair, providing all documentary evidence. 3. The Chair will consult with the Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy. It will then be determined whether there has been an infraction, and if so, whether it is minor or more serious. In either case, if there has been an infraction, an exploratory meeting will be held (Part B, below). A case is minor where the infraction is small in extent, can reasonably be construed as an error on the student’s part, and where there appears to be no intent to deceive. 4. If, on consultation, it is determined that an infraction has taken place, the Manager will place a “flag” in the student’s file, block enrolment activity in the course, and investigate whether there is a prior history. If it is a repeat offence, then the matter must proceed directly to a formal hearing (Part C, below). B. Exploratory Meeting If Minor: 1. The department Chair will conduct an exploratory meeting, attended by the course director and the student. If there is more than one student involved, each should be met with separately. Each may bring a representative. 2. If the student admits to a breach of academic honesty, a suitable penalty — not exceeding failure in the course — will be agreed upon. 2 3. In all cases, outcomes are reported to the Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy. Where a penalty is imposed, a joint agreement is signed by both parties, and approved by the Associate Dean Academic. If Serious: 1. The Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy will chair an exploratory meeting, attended by the course director and student and their representatives. 2. If the student admits to a breach of academic honesty, a suitable penalty — not exceeding failure in the course — will be agreed upon. The Associate Dean, Academic may be consulted on a penalty, if necessary. 3. A joint agreement is signed by both parties, and approved by the Associate Dean, Academic. C. Formal Hearing A formal hearing by AAPPC will be held in cases where: a) It is not the student’s first offence. b) The student neglects to attend the exploratory meeting and it is found that there are grounds to proceed with a charge of a breach of academic honesty. c) The student admits to a breach of academic honesty, but no penalty can be agreed upon. d) The student does not admit to a breach of academic honesty. For further information on the penalties for academic misconduct, please see AMPD’s Policy on Academic Honesty. As approved by AMPD Faculty Council, March 21, 2018 3 COUNSELLING & SUPPORT SERVICES Personal Counselling Services (PCS) aims to help York students realize, develop and fulfill their personal potential in order to maximally benefit from their university experience and manage the challenges of university life. Students come to PCS because of a wide range of concerns including, but not limited to: depression, anxiety, abuse, stress, self-esteem, relationship issues, eating and body image as well as issues related to sexuality. PCS provides: • Short-term individual, couple, and group counselling services to York University students • Personal development workshop and workshop series • Crisis intervention for York students • Consultation to the York Community regarding students in distress/crisis and issues related to mental health in general • Critical incident response debriefings and consultations • Clinical training for graduate students in Psychology, Social Work, and Psychotherapy Learn more about other York University resources related to mental health and wellness at York. The Centre for Sexual Violence, Response, Support & Education coordinates supports and resources for all members of the community that have experienced sexual violence, receives disclosures and complaints, facilitates safety planning, and assists survivors through the complaint process. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence and is in need of support, the Sexual Violence Response Office (SVRO) can help. Please call 416-736-5211 or find them online at yorku.ca/svro. You shouldn’t ever feel guilty or be made to feel guilty about reporting a problem. COURSE-RELATED DISPUTES: The following steps are the steps to be taken in the event of unresolved issues within the class: - If your class has a tutorial leader or studio instructor, speak to your instructor first. - If unresolved, speak to the Course Director. - If unresolved, contact the Chair of the Department at thechair@yorku.ca. IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY SESSIONAL DATES (where you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more. http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm Manage my Academic record
http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/ Last date to drop a fall term (F) course without receiving a grade: November 6, 2020 Last date to drop a winter term (W) course without receiving a grade: March 12, 2021 Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade: February 5, 2021

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University