Theater: Directing II

Instructor - Doug Finlayson
Spring 2013
Class: Tue. 1-2:20

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Course Syllabus

OUTCOMES:
The student will:
- Demonstrate the ability to read a script and gather the necessary questions to ask in rehearsal through the creation of a play analysis and compile a research packet that supplements the analytical work on the play;
- Demonstrate an understanding of what makes a strong groundplan, including diagonal layout, strong DSR and DSL, and developing interesting options for characters to sit in the groundplan;
- Present a rehearsed scene with freshmen actors that demonstrates the visual tools of the director by incorporating diagonal staging, use of levels and depth in the pictures, articulating the concept of “who’s doing what to whom” in the scene visually and revelation of character through behavior;
- Demonstrate fundamental skills of actor coaching, including developing character through action, beat identification, development of back-story, and clarification of objective;
- Show skills in directing without language and scoring text without visuals through in class exercises.

ATTENDANCE:
See Conservatory Handbook

REQUIREMENTS:
1. GROUNDPLAN (For your Scene, use a ruler or computer) Grade – 10%
2. ANALYSIS (Typed/Follow the handout) 12 page minimum Grade - 20%
3. PROMPT BOOK and DRAMATIC ACTION (Units with titles) for SCENE. Included in the promptbook:
   - Visual images
   - Pre-blocking
   - Properties List
   - Rehearsal Schedule Grade - 10%
4. RESEARCH of SCENE Grade - 10%
5. PRESENTATION OF A SCENE.
   - 7-9 minutes maximum
   - 10 hours minimum, 12 hours maximum of rehearsal Grade - 20%
6. INSTRUCTOR’S REHEARSAL VISIT Grade – 10%
7. VISUAL PROJECT Grade - 5%
8. DIRECTING THE LANGUAGE Grade - 5%
9. PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION IN CLASS discussions and activities Grade - 10%

DUE DATES
ALL WORK IS DUE ON TIME. Any work handed in after the due date will effect your final grade.

INSTRUCTOR’S REHEARSAL VISIT
You will need to schedule one run through rehearsal visit with the instructor approximately a week before your final in-class presentation.
CALENDAR - DIRECTING II

JANUARY

WEEK ONE
Tue. 15  Class expectations. Review Analysis

WEEK TWO
Tue. 22  Review Ground plan, Staging and Visual Project

DUE: FINAL SCENE SELECTION

WEEK THREE
Tue. 29  Imagination Workshop
ASSIGNMENT: Prepare Visual Project

FEBRUARY

WEEK FOUR
Tue. 5  Present Visual Projects

WEEK FIVE
Tue. 12  Present Visual Projects
ASSIGNMENT: Next class bring in a copy of the ground plan for your scene and bring ideas for how you will reveal character through behavior in your scene (through props and costumes).

WEEK SIX
Tue. 19  Ground plan Review/Discuss Object Use in your scene.
ASSIGNMENT: Read TALKING SHOP PowerPoint online
Go to Conservatory under Current Students: Class Resources page.

DUE: FIRST DRAFT OF YOUR GROUNDPLAN – USE A RULER or COMPUTER PROGRAM. NO HAND DRAWN GROUNDPLANS!

February 20 UNCOMMON WOMEN AND OTHERS

WEEK SEVEN
Tue. 26  Communication: Designers and Actors

MARCH

WEEK EIGHT
Tue. 5  Actor Coaching

DUE: Written work for your scene.
GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES & RESEARCH
See the attached requirements
PROMPTBOOK & DRAMATIC ACTION
• Script with Units Indicated and Titled
• Ground plan with Pre-blocking for the Scene
• Prop list & Rehearsal Schedule

MID SEMESTER BREAK MARCH 11-15

WEEK NINE
Tue. 19  Rehearsal Process/Directing Language
ASSIGNMENT: With your group, select 4-5 pages of text from a play of your choosing. Focus on Unit shifts, actor’s beats, tempos, silence and the potential for sound to enhance meaning.

REMINDER: You need to schedule a run through rehearsal for the instructor.

WEEK TEN
Tue. 26  Directing the Language Presentations.
March 29 THE PIG IRON PEOPLE

APRIL

WEEK ELEVEN
Tue. 2 Scene workshop/An opportunity to discuss problems or work through unusual challenges you are experiencing in rehearsal for your scene.

April 5 EURYDICE

WEEK TWELVE
Tue. 9 Scene workshop/An opportunity to discuss problems or work through unusual challenges you are experiencing in rehearsal for your scene.

WEEK THIRTEEN
Tue. 16 Scene Presentations

WEEK FOURTEEN
Tue. 23 Scene Presentations

April 24 LEGALLY BLONDE

WEEK FIFTEEN
Tue. 30 Scene Presentations/Wrapup

MAY

WEEK SIXTEEN
Tue. 7 NO CLASS/Showings
Pre-Production

I. Given Circumstances
   Support this section with direct quotes from the dialogue
   A. Environmental facts
      - Geographical & Date – think of this as the design category. Note anything that deals with place and time. Think sets, props, costumes, lights, sound.
      - Economic environment
      - Political environment
      - Social environment
      - Spiritual environment
      - Relationships

   In your analysis, always tie your Environmental facts back to what the characters are trying to do to one another. The text is action. So if a character is saying something they are acting upon another character.

   B. Previous action - List Main Points of Action that have occurred before the play begins.

   C. Polar attitudes of the principal characters (The character’s world view/attitude at the beginning of the play and then their attitude at the end of the play - think “journey”).

II. Character
   Address each character (Use these as a starting point)
   A. Objective (characters in your scene)
      a. Scene Objective
      b. Super Objective (overall objective for the play)
   B. Obstacles standing in the characters’ way
   C. Five (5) quotes that say something about the character’s in your scene (Five for each character in the scene)
   D. Physical Description – Describe in your own words what this character is like. (as you see them).
   E. Create a Dream Cast – Cast your play from professional stage and film actors (them must be living). Provide photos of your dream cast for each role.

III. Idea
   A. Meaning of the title
   B. Philosophical statements in the play – Find a quote the playwright has a character say in the play that captures what the author thinks the plays is about.
   C. In a sentence, what does the play mean to you – in your own words, describe what the play means to you (this is not plot).
RESEARCH
I. Review(s) - If there are no reviews on the play, look for writing about the author.

II. Critical writing on the work and author
   Essays, articles, books, dissertations on the play (older more established works will have 
   more, but always dig deep).

III. The era in which the play was written and in which it is set 
   (Ex: GHOSTS - Victorian society; NORMAL HEART – AIDS in the 80’s)

IV. Political, social and economic issues 
   (Ex: ALL MY SONS - War and economics; THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN – Ireland in 
   the Depression)

V. Fashion, traditions and manners 
   (Ex: COUNTRY WIFE – Societal behaviors during the Restoration)
   Era/Historical Context       Traditions
   Manners                      Economics
   Fashion (Images)             Social issues

VISUAL RESEARCH
I. Literal images (ex: the play takes place in a farmhouse, provide images of farmhouses).
II Abstract Images – find dynamic artwork that inspires you. Include these images in your 
   promptbook:

PROMPTBOOK/DRAMATIC ACTION

I. Promptbook
   A. Pre-blocking:
      • Indicate your pre-blocking with arrows on a series of 
        groundplans.
      • Below the groundplan, describe in simple sentences 
        what the arrows indicate and number each movement in your script.
   B. Properties List - Keep in mind the power objects have to articulate character through 
      action!
   C. Rehearsal schedule - Describe how you would use 10 hours 
      of rehearsal (Ex: 2 Hrs. Read Through/Discussion; 2 Hrs. Stage Pgs. 1-15; 
      2 Hrs. Explore character relationships)
   D. Visuals and Creativity – Spend time making this book a place you enjoy 
      visiting. Use visuals and drawings and quotes to create a safety net for 
      yourself when you get off track in rehearsals.

II. Dramatic Action
   A. Identify and Title the Units in your Promptbook. Be provocative - think of 
      titles that are visual and/or active.
DIRECTING I: SCENE EVALUATION

DIRECTOR: ___________________________ SCENE ___________________________

GROUNDPLAN

Strong Use of Diagonals, creating the “X” 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Imaginative Use of Upstage and Downstage R & L 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Creative playground and obstacle course, ability to move around furniture/objects

VISUAL TOOLS

Use of Depth/Levels 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Use of Pictures to clarify relationships (allegiance, power, comfort, etc.)

Movement

Elimination of profile and other technical concerns (upstaging, movement across the downstage plane.) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Clear character motivation in the movement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Cause and effect, chess game 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Clear sense of “who’s doing what to whom”

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Object Use

Revelation of character through object/costume use

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TOTAL POINTS_________

Comments: