



**THE 415 – DIRECTING I
 COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2020
 T/TR 12:30-1:45
 PAC #112/VIRTUAL CLASSROOM & ONLINE**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M 2-4 p.m., T/R 9:30-10:30 a.m.; W noon-2 p.m. or by appointment
Office Phone: 903-886-5339
University Email Address: Rebecca.worley@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

Thinking Like a Director by Michael Bloom
Trifles, Susan Glaspell (**available for free at <http://www.one-act-plays.com/dramas/trifles.html>**)
Trojan Women, Euripides, trans. Richmond Lattimore (**.pdf, provided by instructor**)
 Various handouts

Recommended Texts:

The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre, Katie Mitchell
Interpreting the Playscript, Anne Fliotsos

Course Description:

The procedure and the problems involved in directing a play through the pre-production process. The principle focus of the course is on practical work and discussion and criticism of ongoing projects. Aside from discussions of the practical work, classroom discussions will focus on readings and events selected according to the interests and expressed needs of the students, and at the discretion of the instructor.

Prerequisite:

THE 213 or permission of the instructor.

Course Introduction:

Welcome! This course provides a practical introduction to directing techniques. This class will be challenging, invigorating, and participatory. Please consider yourself part of a production rather than a classroom as it is usually understood.

Although there is a lecture/discussion component to this course, the nature of our work as directors requires substantial outside work – both inside and outside of the classroom. Please consider yourself part of a learning community where members support one another with suggestions and constructive criticism. Learning, observing, and sharing are central to this

course. *Attitudes of awareness and openness are essential to your development and your contribution to the development of the other members of this class.*

Active participation in discussion and presentation of projects within the class is not only welcome; it is an essential requirement. Positive, helpful and constructive attitudes are also required! Presentations must be well prepared and shared with the understanding that questions and discussion will follow. The ongoing critique of our work as directors is crucial to everyone's learning process. You should be aware that the vast majority of class time is composed of activities in which you are **REQUIRED** to actively participate. *If you have no plans or interest in sincerely exploring directing techniques and accomplishing significant growth as a director, this is not the class for you.*

In this course, I will serve as your teacher, director, guide, and outside eyes/ears as we work very specifically on your individual directorial efforts. I ask that you trust me and approach the work with an open mind, an open heart, discipline and commitment, and a willingness to try new things. Then, we can work through our artistic challenges together!

Course Ethics and Attendance:

Promptness, attendance, and "attentiveness" are valued in this class. Please behave accordingly and do not disrupt the class with excessive talk or the use of cell phones or other devices. It is assumed that students will work cooperatively with one another and all work that is not "original" will be properly credited. See the TAMUC *Student's Guide Handbook* for more information on plagiarism. This is a serious offense that can result in separation from the university. **EVEN if not specifically noted on instructions or prompts for each assignment, plagiarism policies will be strictly enforced.**

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Define, analyze, and demonstrate the role and responsibilities of the director
2. Understand and demonstrate the range of approaches to stage direction in the contemporary theatre.
3. Apply concepts explored and discussed in class to the execution of direction in a variety of production opportunities.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Talking Points (2 @ 1.5 pt. = 3 pts total): Each student will complete lucid and cogent talking points for each reading. These can be in whatever format you choose (bullet points usually work best) but should be questions and/or comments (anything that can assist with a class discussion) that struck you while reading. Though you may write in bullet points, it is expected that students will write at a level appropriate for upper-level course and will exercise critical thinking skills.

Initial Research (2 @ 2.5 pts. = 5 pts total): Students will submit initial research for each play. This can/should include: information about the playwright, the socio-political/economic climate

of the time in which the play was written/is set, the play's production history, the play's genre/style, ideas that underpin the play, and any other information that might prove of use in developing your directorial approach. Similar to your Talking Points, this collection of information can be in whatever format you choose & can be somewhat informal.

Interpreting the Action (3 @ 2.5 pts. = 7.5 pts total): Following the steps listed in Bloom (pp. 31-45), students will submit three sets of formal script analysis for each play. We will discuss specifics for this analysis in class.

External Analysis (3 @ 2.5 pts. = 7.5 pts total): Following the steps listed in Bloom (pp. 46-66), students will submit three sets of formal script analysis for each play. We will discuss specifics for this analysis in class.

Initial Thoughts for Re-locating *Trojan Women* (1 @ 2 pts.): Students will submit a proposal for re-locating (time &/or place) their production of *Trojan Women*. This proposal should not only include the re-location but, also, a brief justification (based on an understanding of the text, as well as initial research) for your directorial approach. You will also include your Vision & Concept statements for your approach(es).

Director's Breakdown (2 @ 10, 15 = 25 pts total): Students will submit a director's breakdown for each directing project (*Trifles*: 10 pts.; and *Trojan Women*: 15 pts.). The style of this breakdown should be pragmatic: an organized compendium of information that would be useful to you as a director. Among the categories of information that would likely be useful: historical and critical material; past productions; themes; style; ground plan and blocking; pacing; key moments; problematic aspects; set pieces; metaphors; sound; colors; lighting; resonances; analogies. Other approaches to the Breakdown will be handed out in class at a later date.

Director's Group Presentations (2 @ 10, 15 = 25 pts total): Over the course of the semester, you will deliver two group presentations (one group; one pair) over your directorial approaches of a play. The first presentation (*Trifles*) will be delivered to the Stage Directing class & should last **ten-fifteen** minutes. You will present your second presentation (*Trojan Women*) to your assigned "design team" from the Theatrical Design course; this presentation should last **fifteen-twenty** minutes. The format of these presentations should/will be similar to that of a first design meeting in which you provide your design team with your directorial vision and inspiration for concept execution. Although you will use PowerPoint/Prezi/Google Slides (or some similar digital presentation platform) as support for your ideas, please understand that you are responsible for presenting your ideas – not just reading your presentation to the class. You should plan your presentation very carefully as you are developing a short directorial "pitch" (shorter presentations will receive substantial grade deductions). Among the categories of information that would be useful: themes, historical and critical material, inspirational items (images, sounds, etc.), metaphors, analogies, as well as any other information that would prove useful in communicating your ideas. **Each presentation MUST include your Vision Statement.** More specific expectations for each presentation will be given at a later time.

You must also come prepared to defend your directorial choices/ideas. One of the goals of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to hone your directorial communication skills. You will be graded on the content and structure/construction of your presentation, ability to communicate your directorial vision effectively, ability to field your peers' questions, and the overall professionalism/preparedness exhibited.

Presentation Responses (2 @ 5 = 10 pts total): Each student will complete two written responses to their peers' presentations. Similar to your Talking Points, these should be questions and/or comments that struck you during the presentations. These should act as a guide for discussion during the feedback session. The goal of the feedback session is **NOT** to "tear down" your peers' ideas but is to help hone our critical thinking and communication skills as directors.

Discussion Board Responses (2 @ 2.5 = 5 pts total): Following your director's presentation to your design team (Theatrical Design course), your designers will post **two sets of six follow-up questions** to our Basecamp Discussion Board (link provided at a later date). These questions will come in two cycles: 1) between your initial presentation & the due date for their rough sketches, & 2) between the due date for their rough sketches & their final design presentation. As you are working in pairs, each of you will respond to **three questions (for a total of six responses)**. Your responses should provide necessary clarification/elaboration for your designers as they work to bring your directorial approach to fruition. We will discuss expectations for your responses at a later date.

Directors' Reflection (10 pts): Your final examination will take the form of a **written reflection** of your directorial presentation & approach for *Trojan Women*, as well as your work over the course of the semester. This presentation should be a **point of critical thinking and self-reflection** (an important, yet often overlooked, aspect of directing). You will, **briefly** address the ways in which you feel you excelled (your strengths), as well as the challenges you encountered (ie: what would you have done differently/changed) in developing and presenting your directorial approach for *Trojan Women*, as well as the ways in which you communicated with your design team (Q&A sessions & Discussion Board Responses). Though you will work in pairs for your *Trojan Women* presentation, your reflection should focus on **your** work (not the work of the pair).

Grading:

The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

Talking Points	3 pts.	90-100 =	A
Initial Research	5 pts.	80-89=	B
Interpreting the Action	7.5 pts.	70-79=	C
External Analysis	7.5 pts.	60-69=	D
Re-locating Initial Thoughts	2 pts.	59 and below=	F
Director's Breakdown	25 pts.		

Director's Presentations	25 pts.
Presentation Responses	10 pts.
Discussion Board Responses	5 pts.
Director's Reflection	10 pts.

Total **100 pts.**

Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, regardless of average.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Technical Support: If you are having technical difficulty with any part of D2L, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my virtual office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an

appointment with me. Communicate, communicate, communicate! The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Email Policy:

Before sending me an email with a general course-specific question, **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check myLeo Online/ask a classmate first**. If your question has already been addressed in one of those places, then you will have the answer you need. If your question does not exist, please feel free to email me.

When emailing me: Please make your emails clear and concise, written with proper grammar in order to assure my earliest attention. In addition, please follow some common “email etiquette” procedures in order to keep our electronic communication effective and efficient. Specifically:

- Write a relevant subject line (e.g., “Directing question,” or “THE 415 meeting request”)
- Address me by name (ie: "Dear Professor Worley" or "Hi Becca" or just "Becca")
- Concisely state what it is you need. If it can't be communicated in a concise manner, perhaps request an appointment. **If requesting an appointment**, give me times that you are available **in the initial email!!!** My office hours are posted above.
- Use a "sign-off" ("Thank you" is always good) and **sign your name**.

Not following these guidelines potentially puts you at the bottom of my list for response time.

Student Resources:

Department of Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/mmct/default.asp>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Attendance Policy:

You may accumulate two (2) absences before any penalty occurs. **There are no additional absences allowed without penalty. Grades will be dropped in ½ letter grade increments for every class absences beyond the first two absences.** While I will be flexible with technical difficulties, **plan accordingly**. Of course, if you have a prolonged illness or injury, or if a family emergency arises, speak with your instructor ASAP. **Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. I will work to support you getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.**

Late Arrivals:

As with absences, I will be flexible with technical difficulties; however, all attempts to join our weekly meetings **on time** should be made. The class will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m.! If you are experiencing technical issues, please contact me so I know you are making all attempts to join class on time. Also, you are expected to stay in the meeting until you are dismissed from class. **Two late arrivals (within the ten-minute grace period) or early departures (or any combination of the two) may be counted as one absence in the class.**

Late Work:

I do not accept late work.

Extra Credit:

The instructor reserves the right to offer extra-credit to all students, and to gauge its application appropriately and uniformly for all.

Incompletes:

Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will NOT be given for a final grade in this course. Per University policy, students who **because of circumstances beyond their control** are unable to attend classes will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of X (incomplete) in all courses in which they were **maintaining passing grades at the time of the request** for an incomplete.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:**Face-Coverings**

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status.

Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

**Reading and Assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below.
All assignments are due VIA EMAIL**

WEEK ONE

- T Aug 25 Course Overview
Vision & Concept – what is your directorial guide?
Playing with Open Scenes – Vision & Concept
- Th Aug 27 Discuss expectations for Director's Breakdowns & Director's
Presentations
Determine groups for *Trifles*

WEEK TWO

- T Sept 1 **Reading:** Bloom, Intro - Part I (pp. 3-66) & *Trifles*
Talking Points #1 due
Discuss Reading
- Th Sept 3 **Initial Research due** (follow pg. 25-30 as guide)
Discuss findings in context of developing a production
Cont. discussion of Pt. I

WEEK THREE

Monday, September 7 - LABOR DAY

- T Sept 8 **Interpreting the Action due** (follow pg. 31-45 as guide)
Discuss findings in context of script analysis
- Th Sept 10 **External Analysis due** (follow pg. 46-66 as guide)
Discuss analysis

WEEK FOUR

- T Sept 15 **Reading:** Bloom, Part II (pp. 69-116)
Talking Points #2 due
Discuss Reading
- Th Sept 17 Cont. discussion of Pt. II
Developing your approach for *Trifles*

WEEK FIVE
TETA VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 9/25-26

- T Sept 22 Continue working on Director Presentation for *Trifles*
- Th Sept 24 Continue working on Director Presentation for *Trifles*

WEEK SIX
DoT Production *FaithFall* Sept. 29-Oct. 4
TETA VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 10/2-3

- T Sept 29 **Director Group 1 Presentation – *Trifles***
Presentation Feedback Session #1
- Th Oct 1 **Director's Breakdown for *Trifles* due!**
Director Group 2 Presentation – *Trifles*
Presentation Feedback Session #1

WEEK SEVEN

- T Oct 6 **Reading: *Trojan Women***
Discuss Final Director's Presentation (Re-locating *Trojan Women*)
Determine pairs for *Trojan Women*
Discuss *Trojan Women*
- Th Oct 8 Continue *Trojan Women* discussion
Review Bloom Pt. I in context of *Trojan Women*
Initial Research due (follow pg. 25-30 as guide)
Initial Thoughts for Time/Place due

WEEK EIGHT

DoT Production *Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play* Oct. 13-18

- T Oct 13 **Interpreting the Action & External Analysis due** (Prologue-Episode 2;
lines 1-789)
Share & discuss
- Th Oct 15 **Interpreting the Action & External Analysis due** (Choral Ode 3-end; lines 790-
end)
Share & discuss

WEEK NINE

- T Oct 20 Review Bloom Pt. II in context of *Trojan Women*

Th Oct 22 Work with partner on presentation
WEEK TEN
DoT Production *I am Acquainted with the Night* Oct. 27-Nov. 1

T Oct 27 Work with partner on presentation

Th Oct 29 Work with partner on presentation

WEEK ELEVEN

T Nov 3 **Director Group 1 Presentation – *Trojan Women***
 Q&A with Theatrical Design class

Th Nov 5 **Director Group 2 Presentation – *Trojan Women***
 Q&A with Theatrical Design class

WEEK TWELVE

T Nov 10 **Director Group 3 Presentation – *Trojan Women***
 Q&A with Theatrical Design class

Th Nov 12 **Presentation Feedback Session #2**
 Discussion Board Questions due (Designers)

WEEK THIRTEEN

DoT Production *Corner Lot* Nov. 17-22

T Nov 17 Director's Breakdown revisit session
Discussion Board Answers due (Directors)

Th Nov 19 Sit in on Theatrical Design Rough Sketch Presentation
 Q&A session with designers

WEEK FOURTEEN

T Nov 24 Sit in on Theatrical Design Rough Sketch Presentation
 Q&A session with designers

Th Nov 26 **THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS**

WEEK FIFTEEN

T Dec 1 Work on Director's Breakdown
 Discussion Board Questions due (Designers)

Th Dec 3 Work on Director's Breakdown
Discussion Board Answers due (Directors)

WEEK SIXTEEN**Final Exam – Thursday, Dec. 10th**

- **Directors' Reflection Presentation & Director's Breakdown due by NOON**
- **Theatrical Design Final – Encouraged to attend**