



**THE 541 – SEMINAR IN STAGE DIRECTION  
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2022  
T 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m. Performing Arts Center #112**

**Instructor:** Triston P. Pullen, Adjunct Professor of Theatre  
**Office Location:** Performing Arts Center #110  
**Office Hours:** M/W 11:00am-12:00pm and **ONLINE VIA SCHEDULED ZOOM APPOINTMENT**  
**Office Phone:** 903-335-1364  
**University Email Address:** Triston.Pullen@tamuc.edu

<b>COURSE INFORMATION</b>
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**Textbooks:**

***A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* by Anne Bogart. ISBN-10: 0415238323**

***Venus* by Suzan Lori Parks**

***Great Directors at Work* by David Richard Jones**

*\*Note: In addition to readings in the above texts, other readings in this course will come from published journal articles, interviews, and chapters of other texts that the instructor will provide in PDF format on D2L.*

**Required Viewing:**

*Doll's House: Part Two* (Main Stage)  
*A Texas Romance* (Main Stage)

Tickets for University Playhouse productions are available for a nominal fee. You may purchase tickets at:

[https://www.eventbrite.com/o/dept-of-theatre-texas-aampm-university-commerce-34067403123?fbclid=IwAR3lRepL1D2AprCMtTP18oXSFQsuCieZGPSliROByvE2FoDs1L8\\_n5mX7HQ](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/dept-of-theatre-texas-aampm-university-commerce-34067403123?fbclid=IwAR3lRepL1D2AprCMtTP18oXSFQsuCieZGPSliROByvE2FoDs1L8_n5mX7HQ)

If you need help purchasing tickets call 903-886-5900 or email at [playhouseboxoffice@tamuc.edu](mailto:playhouseboxoffice@tamuc.edu).

*\*Note: Please understand that viewing a performance of this University Playhouse show listed above is an absolute requirement of the course. Part of becoming a skilled director is viewing other directors' successes and challenges. Clear your schedule now!*

**\*\* IF** you can not see these show due to being a distant learn you **MUST** communicate with me as soon as possible so that we can find an alternative way for you to get the grade.

### **Course Description:**

The goal of this course is to examine the evolution of the director's role during the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Since the director's vision of theatre cannot be realized except as part of a collaborative venue, the course will also include attention to acting theory and approaches to performance training. Such study should lead you to consider new perspectives and approaches in your future directing endeavors. Students will engage with written materials as a point of departure for considering issues relating to staging, performance, and the shifting roles of theatre artists. They will engage with these materials through in-class discussion, oral presentations, exercises, research, and written work.

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

1. display a learned knowledge of influential theatre directors' artistic approaches.
2. critically, knowledgeably, and professionally evaluate varying approaches to actor training and directing.
3. synthesize academic/artistic research into cohesive scholarly writing and oral presentation.

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>
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**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION** (150 pts, 10 points per day):

Your Active Participation will play a substantial role in acquiring your final grade – for good reason! This graduate course is structured to support a “community of learners.” In order to contribute to the community, you must come to class fully alert (not under the influence of... any non-medical substances!), prepared, and ready to actively participate in discussions of assigned readings or engagement in determined activities, etc. Please be advised that your attendance at the University Playhouse production will be considered part of your Active Participation grade as well. Be aware that the “participation” aspect of your grade requires more than simply being present or arriving to class on time (although absences and late arrivals/early departures will significantly reduce your Active Participation grade - *please keep in mind that, of course, you must be present to participate*). Lack of demonstrable preparation will have a substantial negative impact on your course grade.

As graduate students you should realize the importance of acquiring skill in voicing your opinions during discussion in positive and respectful ways. Realize that sometimes you will have to agree to disagree with other members of the class. As I know that you all can do: avoid “knee-jerk reactions” and frame your comments respectfully, with scholarly intelligence, and as a point of academic discourse. *Disrespect, rudeness, or offensive language of any kind has no place in the classroom. If such an instance occurs (either toward another student or the instructor), I will ask the student to leave and/or substantial points will be reduced from the student's Active Participation grade.*

## **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DIRECTING MANIFESTO (100pts):**

Think deeply about your own informed beliefs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a director and answer the question: “What are *my* aesthetic theories about directing in contemporary theatre?” In your Manifesto, you can also consider *any or all* of the following questions: What is theatre/performance? What should it be? Why do we do it? Why should we do it? How should we do it? What is its ideal purpose? What’s wrong with how theatre and/or directing is done today and what should be done to change that? If you could create a new credo for directing, what would that be? How should the director relate to the audience or to society at large? How or why is theatre still important or relevant (or how could it be made by the director to be so)? How does theatre reflect or differ from real life? You may write your manifesto in *any style* that helps make your point– poetic, ranting, stream of consciousness, reasoned essay, dialogue, etc.). The Manifesto should be two pages in length and read by the writer during class with discussion to follow. I am particularly interested in the depth and clarity of thought displayed in your paper and the professionalism of your formal presentation of the document (rehearse reading it with expression and in a professional manner!). You will be graded on content, depth of thought/reflection, and the professionalism of your presentation. *\*Measures Student Learning Outcomes 2 and 3.*

## **GROUP PROJECTS (150pts, 3 total at 50 each):**

There will be 3 group projects in this class. Assigned partners will be given during the semester. Using the play *Venus* by Suzan Lori Parks, you will find a scene and create a paper stage, a hypotical paper production, to outline how the director of the week would approach and create the scene. More information will be given during the semester.

## **GUIDED CRITICAL DISCUSSION PROJECT (100pts):**

Each graduate student will prepare to guide a short, round-table, critical class discussion over a specifically assigned section of *A Director Prepares* and *The Director’s Voice* (Anne Bogart). One of the goals of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to hone your critical discussion facilitation skills through interaction with your colleagues. Please understand that you are responsible for leading the class discussion – not just summarizing points and lecturing to the class – and you must come prepared with questions and topics to stimulate that class discussion effectively! Remember, everyone will have engaged in the reading in advance. Plan your discussion prompts very carefully. You should pull out what you believe to be the three most important points in your assigned reading and develop at least one critical discussion question for each point. Remember, you should really think critically when developing your questions – i.e. construct your questions in ways that evoke class discussions about the broader ramifications and/or complexities of the point for the director in contemporary theatre (*not* – “*what do you guys think of that?*” kind of questions!). Each student’s guided discussion will last approximately ten minutes in length. You should strive for effectiveness of your ability to evoke and facilitate fruitful artistic/scholastic discussion amongst your peers, while also displaying depth in your insights (in both your presentation and in response to your colleagues’). More detailed description of this assignment will be discussed in class. *\*Measures Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.*

## **READING RESPONSES (300 pts, 6 Total at 50 pts each):**

Choose a quote from the text that you feel exemplifies the information being shared in the reading, share it and its page number, and write a minimum of one page, or about 325 words. You should discuss A) what the quote means in relation to the 21<sup>st</sup> century director and the theatre as a whole are form, and B) how you can apply the information in your practice as a

theater maker. Your quote and your response to it will demonstrate your success at the learning goal “think critically about major 21<sup>st</sup> century directors” and translate the information into theoretical thoughts about your own craft. Your writing is due at the beginning of class (4:30pm) and must be submitted as a word doc via D2L.

*\*Measures Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.*

## **FINAL PRESENTATIONS (200pts): DUE ON MAY 3<sup>RD</sup> BY 4:30PM**

**1) Research Paper (100 pts) :** Pick one of the directors listed below and write a research paper cover the life, work, methods, and impacts on the theatre of the director. This research paper should be in **MLA format** with a bibliography. You should have **a minimum of 5 sources**. This research paper should be **8-10 pages in length**. Images are encouraged, however, make sure to cite each image. More information will be given about the research paper in class.

**2) Presentation (100pts):** Each presentation/discussion should last thirty-five to forty-five minutes (including discussion time that you lead.) You are welcome to use a power point, etc. presentation as support for your ideas, please understand that you are responsible for leading and facilitating the class discussion as well – not just summarizing points and lecturing to the class. You should plan your presentation very carefully as you are developing a thirty to thirty-five minute lesson plan (shorter/significantly longer presentations will receive substantial grade deductions.)

You are required to email each student a handout/study guide for your presentation. The handout/study guide should include: relevant biographical information and professional accomplishments garnered through outside research, an outline of major points in the reading, and suggestions for additional reading. *REMEMBER: You must also come prepared with questions and topics to stimulate class discussion during your assigned presentation/timeframe.* One of the goals of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to hone your teaching and presentation skills. You will be graded on the content of your presentation/handout, the structure/construction of your presentation/handout, ability to lead class discussion effectively, ability to field your peers' questions, and the overall professionalism/preparedness exhibited.

Your entire Final Project will be graded on both content and construction. *\*Measures Student Learning Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.)*

### *Directors to Choose From:*

- Mary Zimmerman
- Theatre de la Jeune Lune
- Ping Chong
- Meyerhold
- Michael Chekhov
- Jacques Copeau
- Adler
- Frantic Theatre Assembly
- Grotowski
- Richard Schechner

**Grading:**

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

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Ranges</b>
A+	990 - 1000
A	910 - 989
A-	900 - 909
B+	890 - 899
B	810 - 889
B-	800 - 809
C+	790 - 799
C	710 - 789
C-	700 - 709
D+	690 - 699
D	610 - 679
D-	600 - 609
F	0 - 599

**GRADING RUBRIC:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Active Participation (150 pts)	
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Directing Manifesto (100pts)	
Guided Critical Discussion (100pts)	
Readings Responses (300 pts – 6 total at 50 each)	
Group Presentation (150pts- 3 total at 50 each)	
Final Research Paper (100 pts)	
Final Presentations (100 pts)	
<b>Semester Grade</b>	

<b>TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS</b>
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**WORKING EMAIL REQUIREMENT:** It is a course expectation that you have a working email address that you check daily. There may be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so.

**SAVING OF ASSIGNMENTS:** Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally go missing. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a thumb drive, etc. Do not depend on your paper staying on the hard drive of any university computer, as it will be deleted, altered, or worse – turned in by someone else as his/her work! Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your graded and original assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### **Contacting Triston P. Pullen:**

Please feel free to visit me during my 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. It is not an imposition. I am always willing to meet via Zoom. Please note: the easiest and most reliable way to contact me is via email. I check it fairly frequently.

### **Student Resources:**

#### **Department of Theatre**

Performing Arts Center (PAC) 101  
Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)  
<http://www.tamuc.edu/mmct/default.asp>

#### **Communication Skills Center**

Talbot Hall  
<http://www.tamuc.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### **Course Specific Procedures:**

**ATTENDANCE:** Prompt attendance is expected at all class meetings. If, for any reason, you have more than one absence during the semester, this will have a substantial impact on your overall course grade. You are expected to have completed all reading material and/or assignments for a given date prior to class time; the totality of your knowledge of reading materials will be evaluated on the basis of your contributions to group discussion. You are allowed one *emergency* absence in this course. Under normal circumstances, upon the second absence, the student will receive a deduction of six points from his/her final grade; upon the third absence, the student will receive another six point deduction from his/her final grade; *due to the discussion-based and participatory nature of this course, under normal circumstances, upon the fourth absence the student will receive an automatic F in the course.* \*For more information on the university attendance policy please go to the following link:  
<http://www7.tamuc.edu/registrar/attendance.asp>

**LATE ARRIVALS:** Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. If you are late for class, your participation grade will reflect this. The class will begin promptly at 4:30 p.m.! If you arrive after 4:40 p.m., please do not enter the classroom (you will be marked absent regardless). If you arrive within the ten minute grace period, please do so discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. Arrival within the ten minute grace period constitutes a "tardy." Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. An early departure will significantly reduce your participation grade as well. *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.*

**SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:** All assignments must be submitted in Brightspace D2L unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Under normal circumstances: 1) late written assignments will not be accepted in this graduate-level class; 2) presentations must be made during the assigned class sessions or these will not count toward the final grade (under normal circumstances, an absence on the date of an assigned presentation will result in a grade of zero for the assignment).

**ADAPTATION OF ASSIGNMENTS:** Due to the fluid nature of this class, some assignments may need to be adapted. All changes will be announced prior to implementation.

**INCOMPLETES:** Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (X) will not be given as a final grade in this course.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

### **University Specific Policies and Procedures:**

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** This course adheres strictly to the college's guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the *Student's Guide Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated.

*Note: All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you; otherwise, you can be accused of plagiarizing yourself – which falls under the category of academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the head of the department, who will in turn decide the appropriate course of action. Remember: Citing=good; Not Citing=very bad! Make sure that you understand the intricacies of citations, formatting, etc., so that you avoid unintentional plagiarism at all costs. (Please be aware that an instance of academic dishonesty could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester or worse – overall suspension from the program.)*

**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  
James G. Gee Library  
Room 162  
Phone (903) 468-8148 or (903) 886-5835  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

*\*Note: Please be aware that under no circumstances can I implement any disability accommodations without official documentation from the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services at Texas A&M University - Commerce.*

**STUDENT CONDUCT:** All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Student's Guide Handbook*, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.)

**NON DISCRIMINATION 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. For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer. Web url: <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

**\*Tentative Schedule:** (subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

### Week One- Tuesday, February 1

Introduction to Course

Directing Manifesto Presentations

Introductory Discussions and A Hidden World

Overview of Guided Critical Discussion Project and Self-Evaluation/ Readings

Presentations/Professional Performance Viewing

**DUE: DIRECTING MANIFESTO, Reading of A Hidden World**

### Week Two: Tuesday, February 8

Discussion of Venus by Suzan Lori-Parks

Discuss Group Projects and Assign Partners for Julie Taymour Project

**Guest Director:** Cristina Duarte at 4:30pm

### Week Three: Tuesday, Feb 15

Stanislavski Reading Discussion

Stanislavski Presentation

Paper Stage Talk Through

Discussion over Guided Discussion Projects: *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (Bogart)

### **1. Memory**



2. Violence
3. Eroticism
4. Terror
5. Stereotype
6. Embarrassment
7. Resistance
8. Anna Bogart BIO
9. Anna Bogart The Director's Voice

DUE: Reading Response for Stanislavski chapter in Great Director At Work

Week Four: Tuesday, February 22

Discussion over Guided Discussion Projects: *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (Bogart)

1. Memory
2. Violence
3. Eroticism
4. Terror
5. Stereotype
6. Embarrassment
7. Resistance
8. Anna Bogart BIO
9. Anna Bogart The Director's Voice

DUE: Anna Bogart Presentations

Week Five: Tuesday, March 1

Julie Taymour Reading Discussion

Julie Taymour Presentation

Group Project Partner Check in

DUE: Reading Response for Julie Taymour in The Director's Voice

Week Six: Tuesday, March 8

Julie Taymour Group Projects Presentations

Assign Brecht Group Project Partners

DUE: Julie Taymour Group Projections

Week Seven: Tuesday, March 15

SPRING BREAK

Week Eight: Tuesday, March 22

Discussion on Brecht Reading

Brecht Presentation

**Guest Director:** Josh Brewer

DUE: Brecht Reading Response

Week Nine: Tuesday March 29

Brecht Group Project Presentations

Assign Robert Wilson Group Project Partners  
DUE: Brecht Group Projects

Week Ten: Tuesday, April 5

Kazan Discussion  
George C. Wolfe Presentation  
Kazan Presentation  
**Guest Director:** Moises H.  
DUE: Kazan Reading Response

Week Eleven: Tuesday, April 12

Brook Discussion  
Brook/Artaud Presentation  
**Guest Director:** Triston P. Pullen  
Due: Brook Reading Response

Week Twelve: Tuesday, April 19

Robert Wilson Discussion  
Robert Wilson Presentation  
**Guest Director:** TBD  
DUE: Robert Wilson Reading Response

Week Thirteen: Tuesday, April 26

Robert Wilson Group Project Presentations  
Check in for Final Projects  
DUE: Robert Wilson Group Project

Week Fourteen: Tuesday, May 3

Final Presentation  
DUE: Final Research Papers and Final Presentation PowerPoints

Week Fifteen: Tuesday, May 10

Final Presentation