



**THE 415 – STAGE DIRECTION
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2022
T/TR 12:30-1:45 p.m.
PERFORMING ARTS #100**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Associate Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M 2-4 p.m., T/R 11 a.m.-noon; W noon-2 p.m. or by appointment
Office Phone: 903-886-5339
University Email Address: Rebecca.worley@tamuc.edu
Communication Response Time: M-F within 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

Thinking Like a Director by Michael Bloom
Scenes from realistic plays (provided for you by your instructor)
Various handouts

Additional Readings:

I encourage you to put money aside to order new scripts. This will be a good opportunity for you to begin (or continue) building your own script library. Most scripts cost around \$7 a piece plus shipping. Since the book for this course costs very little, I would suggest putting some money aside for this expense now and begin budgeting that regularly in semesters to come. Searching for and buying new scripts will help you as a director remain aware of what is happening in the theatre world and expand your knowledge of theatrical works.

Required Viewing:

Night Sky

Directed by Kiley Towne
Produced in the Main Stage Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
October 11-15 at 7:30 p.m. and October 16 at 3 p.m.

Dragons Love Tacos

Directed by Carrie Klypchak
Produced in the Main Stage Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
December 7-10 at 6 p.m. and December 11 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available for a nominal fee at EventBrite (tamucplayhouse.eventbrite.com)

Course Description:

The procedure and the problems involved in directing a play from selection of the script, auditions, and conducting rehearsals to the final production. 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. Certain library reading may be assigned from time to time, and articles will be distributed in class for students to read.

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.* Please leave your worries, frustrations, competitiveness, and negativity outside the classroom door as much as possible. *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 in a live performance
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:

Participation(10 pts.): *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.*

Participation is a large portion of your grade in this course – for good reason! As mentioned above, participation is vital in this class. This is an interactive environment and students must not only attend, but must also actively contribute to each class.

Furthermore, the completion of miscellaneous homework assignments will also be considered part of your participation grade. There will be quite a few of these short assignments and they are all important in the development of your skills as director.

Positive, respectful and helpful attitudes are mandatory. *I would like to make this very clear: I will make every effort to treat you with the respect that I believe you deserve. You are also expected to treat your peers and myself with that same respectful attitude.* If I believe that a student is disrespectful, I will ask that person to leave the classroom. In this event, the student will receive a zero for any activities conducted that day in class and receive a zero for his/her participation grade for the day (no matter how long you have been in class). Disrespect, rudeness, disruptive behavior, or negative attitudes will **NOT BE TOLERATED**. It should go without saying that refusal to participate in any activity or part of an activity during class will result in a substantial and appropriate loss of participation points for the student.

Participation grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation and Growth grade of an 8.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

***Note: 3 of the 10 total points for participation are gained through submission of Talking Points .** 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. Talking Points are to be submitted **via email; however, students will need access to their work for all classes (hard or digital copies).**

Application Papers (2 @ 10pts = 20 pts. total): Students are required to attend performances of both Playhouse productions (clear your schedule NOW!). Students will submit a critical analysis of some aspect or part of the production relating to the direction (casting choices,

Vision/Concept, blocking, character relations, etc). Papers should be approx. 3-4 pages, typed, 12 pt. font (or whatever your default font/size is), well-organized (complete sentences, full paragraphs). I *will* consider spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure in the grading. (See grading rubric in your syllabus). Papers are to be submitted **via email. I will not accept hard copies of your papers.**

In-Class Directing Scene (15 pts): Each student in this course will be responsible for directing a short scene (from an assigned play) in class. Members of the class will be used as your actors. Students will be responsible for casting, preparing for rehearsals, and directing your scene.

Directing Proposal (10 pts): Students will submit a proposal to direct a one-act play – or a reasonably freestanding segment of a play – to direct. The play will be modern Realism (written in the last 50-ish years). Each proposal will include a brief reason for the selection, a synopsis of the play, Vision, Concept, special technical requirements, and special casting requirements (if any).

Director's Breakdown (2 @ 10, 15 = 25 pts total): Once scenes/plays are assigned/approved, students will submit a director's breakdown for each directing project (in-class scene: 10 pts.; and final scene: 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; 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. **Your final breakdown must** also include the following:

- Rehearsal Calendar: Prior to the first rehearsal, students will create and submit a rehearsal calendar.
- Rehearsal Journals: After each rehearsal, students should take a few moments to reflect upon the rehearsal and write a brief journal entry. Topics can include what was on the schedule for that rehearsal, what was actually accomplished, discoveries made, changes made, etc.

Final presentation (20 pts): Each student in this course will be responsible for casting*, arranging and preparing rehearsals, and directing a play (contemporary Realism ONLY); and for arranging for the instructor to visit a rehearsal. The running time of each play should be around 10-15 minutes. In lieu of a final exam, the final presentations will take place during the final exam period.

*I would prefer that all casting is done from *within* our class. Still, if you can make a good case for using an outside actor (make careful note of final performance dates/times), I will consider it. You **MUST** get permission from me to use an outside actor & provide sufficient evidence that there will **NOT** be a scheduling conflict.

Grading:

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

Participation	10 pts.	90-100 =	A
Papers	20 pts.	80-89=	B
In-Class Scene	15 pts.	70-79=	C
Proposal	10 pts.	60-69=	D
Breakdowns	25 pts.	59 and below=	F
Final Presentation	20 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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these 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 Brightspace, 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 office hours at any time during the semester. Virtual meetings during these hours via Zoom are available (& preferable. If an in-person meeting is preferred, I request that you wear a mask while in my office). If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. 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.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
--

Course Specific Procedures:**Face-Coverings**

While I cannot require that you wear a mask while in class, I **STRONGLY ENCOURAGE** you to do so.

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.** 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.**

You should report a COVID-19 diagnosis to the university, regardless of where tested or if you have had close contact with someone who tests positive. This can be done by **emailing eoc@tamuc.edu**. Prompt reporting is required and is essential to allow for proper contact tracing and help limit the potential spread of the virus.

Late Arrivals:

The class will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m. If you arrive after 12:40 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. *It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain.* Also, you are expected to stay 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.**

Cell Phones and Laptops:

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom. Please do not check messages or engage in text messaging during class. This is disruptive to the flow of the course. You are welcome to take class notes on a laptop or other electronic device; however, these devices should only be used for taking notes over the current discussions/activities. If I suspect that laptops are being used for other purposes, I will ban them from the classroom.

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.

Syllabus Change Policy:

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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:**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>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

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](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

<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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 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/)

<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.

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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel