



**THE 415 – STAGE DIRECTION
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2024
T/TR 11-12:15
PERFORMING ARTS #126**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Associate 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 12:30-2:30. or by appointment
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 open scenes & 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 \$10 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:

Student Showcase: An Evening of Shorts

Directed by Dept. of Theatre students
 Produced in the Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
 Sept. 20-22 at 7:30 p.m.

Stuart Little

Directed by Rebecca Worley & Brianna Whitt
 Produced in the Main Stage Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce
 Nov. 20-23 at 6 p.m. and Nov. 24 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available at boxoffice.tamucplayhouse.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 1351: Fundamentals of Acting & THE 2355: Play Analysis with a minimum grade of C or permission of 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. *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.

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.

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 – 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.

Positive, respectful and helpful attitudes are essential. *You are expected to treat your peers and myself with a respectful attitude.* 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.**

Directing Exercise Scene Presentations (3 @ 5, 10, & 20 = 35 pts total): You will direct & present three realistic scenes in this class, applying the fundamental principles studied. Scene Exercise #1 will be an open scene, worth 10 pts; Scene Exercise #2 will be a short scene from a play (from an assigned play), worth 15 pts; & the Final Scene Presentation will be a short (10 minute) scene from a CONTEMPORARY REALISTIC play of your choosing. Members of the class will be used as your actors for all three scenes. Students will be responsible for casting, preparing for rehearsals, and directing your scene.

Written Work for Directing Exercise #1 (2.5 pts): Students will submit written work for Directing Exercise #1 that explains your directorial choices, including blocking, staging, character relationships, & more. Students will receive a specific form to complete & submit.

Directing Proposal (2.5 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 @ 5, 10 = 15 pts total): Once scenes/plays are assigned/approved, students will submit a director's breakdown for their Directing Exercise #2 (10 pts) & Final Scene Presentation (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. You must also include a copy of the script(s) with blocking notation. Other approaches to the Breakdown will be handed out in class at a later date.

Directors' Reflection (15 pts): A **written reflection** of your work over the course of the semester (Directing Exercise Scene Presentations #1, #2, & Final, directing proposal, application papers, directing breakdowns, etc.). This paper 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), the challenges you encountered (ie: what would you have done differently/changed), and discoveries made about yourself (as a director/theatre practitioner). Papers should be approx. 1-2 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. Papers are to be submitted **via email. I will not accept hard copies of your papers.**

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
Directing Exercise Scenes	35 pts.	70-79=	C
Written Work/Proposal	5 pts.	60-69=	D
Breakdowns	15 pts.	59 and below=	F
Director's Reflection	15 pts.		
Total	100 pts.		

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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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

My Personal Policy:

Please keep in mind that I am a human. I have a family. As such, please see below for my boundaries so that I may maintain my own self-care yet still be available for you as my student:

- You may email me at any point for guidance, questions, etc. I will respond within 24 hours between the hours of **9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday**

- General course-specific questions: **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check D2L/ask a classmate first**. If your question has already been addressed, then you will have the answer you need.
- **When emailing me:** Please make your emails clear and concise. 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 (ie: “Directing class question,”)
 - 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, schedule an appointment (see below)
 - **Sign your name**
- I will **NOT** check email on the weekends, which means I will respond Monday morning.
- If you need to ask me an **URGENT** question regarding class at *night*, you may text me. Note, however, that I will **only respond between the hours of 5-8 p.m.**
- If you need me outside of the student/teacher relationship, please text me. I will respond (via text or phone call) as soon as I can.

Office Hours & Appointments:

If I am in my office & the door is open, feel free to visit me during my office hours. Scheduling an in-person or Zoom appointment in advance, however, is preferred. To schedule an appointment, scan the QR code below or go to: <https://forms.gle/Mo7oHKWRDeFZF8N8A>.



COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

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 absence 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.

Late Arrivals:

The class will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m. If you arrive late, please enter the space discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. 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 while in class. Please do not check messages or engage in text messaging during class. Laptops should only be used for class purposes.

Late Work:

Under normal circumstances, 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>

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/>

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.

Mental Health

Please make sure that you are taking care of yourself, not just with the work in this class, but also balancing what is happening in your life. Know that there are people willing to listen and help if needed. If you or someone you care about is in need of any assistance, please reach out to me or use the following resources:

- 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
- The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app or go to <http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html> and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.
- Crisis Text Line: Text "MHFA" to 741741
- Lifeline Crisis Chat: www.crisischat.org
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
 - Main Number: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 - Spanish: 1-888-628-9454
 - TTY (teletypewriter): Preferred relay service or daily 711 then 1-800-799-4889

AI Use in Courses (Draft)

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Reading and assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below. All written assignments are due via email in either a Word doc attachment or shared as a Google Doc. DO NOT send .pdfs & make sure you make me an editor if submitting Google Docs. Bring all appropriate texts to class!

**WEEK ONE
AUDITIONS 8/29**

T Aug 27 Course Overview

Th Aug 29 Directing techniques - Staging Focus, and Composition

**WEEK TWO
LABOR DAY 9/2**

T Sept 3 Directing techniques, cont

Th Sept 5 Directing techniques, cont

WEEK THREE

T Sept 10 Discuss expectations for Director's Breakdowns & Proposal for final presentation; Director's Vision & Concept

Th Sept 12 **Reading:** Bloom, Intro - Part I (pp. 3-66)
Talking Points #1 due
Discuss reading

WEEK FOUR

DoT Production Student Showcase 9/20-22

T Sept 17 **Reading:** Bloom, Part II (pp. 69-116)
Talking Points #2 due
Discuss reading

Th Sept 19 **Reading:** Bloom, Part III (through "The External Perspective in Rehearsals," pp.119-183)
Talking Points #3 due
Discuss reading

WEEK FIVE

TxETA CONFERENCE 9/25-28

T Sept 24 Wrap up reading discussions
Assignment of Directing Exercise Scene #1 (the open scene) & Directing Exercise Scene #2 (working with a script)

Th Sept 26 **NO CLASS - Becca at TxETA: Rehearse on your own!**

WEEK SIX

T Oct 1 ***Student Showcase paper due!***
Rehearsals for Directing Exercise Scene #1

Th Oct 3 **Written work for Directing Exercise Scene #1 due!**
Presentation & Discussion of Directing Exercise Scene #1

WEEK SEVEN

T Oct 8 Group 1: rehearsals for Directing Exercise Scene #2

Th Oct 10 Scene work - Rehearsals

WEEK EIGHT

T Oct 15 Scene work - Rehearsals

Th Oct 17 Performance of scenes
Scene feedback

WEEK NINE

T Oct 22 **Proposal for Final Presentation due!**
Group 2: rehearsals for Directing Exercise Scene #2

Th Oct 24 Scene work - Rehearsals

WEEK TEN

T Oct 29 Scene work - Rehearsals

Th Oct 31 Performance of scenes
Scene feedback

WEEK ELEVEN

T Nov 5 Group 2: rehearsals for Directing Exercise Scene #2

Th Nov 7 Scene work - Rehearsals

WEEK TWELVE

T Nov 12 Scene work - Rehearsals

Th Nov 14 **Director's Breakdown for Directing Exercise #2 due!**
Performance of scenes
Scene feedback

WEEK THIRTEEN**DoT Production *Stuart Little* 9/19-24**

T Nov 19 *Stuart Little* School performance (9:30 a.m. curtain)
Rehearsals for Final Directing Scene

Th Nov 21 Scene work - Rehearsals

WEEK FOURTEEN**THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/28-12/1**

T Nov 26 Scene work - Rehearsals

Th Nov 28 **THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS**

WEEK FIFTEEN

T Dec 3 **Final Scene Presentations - GROUP 1**

Th Dec 5 **Final Scene Presentations - GROUP 2**

WEEK SIXTEEN

Final: Tuesday, 12/10, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Final Director's Breakdown, Director's Reflection, & *Stuart Little* paper due via email by 12:30 p.m.!

OFFICIAL RUBRIC -
Grading of Performance Response Essays

Format and Details 3 pts.

- Does the author have a clear introductory paragraph that expresses the goal(s) of the overall paper (See prompt.)?
- Does the opening sentence draw the reader in?
- Does the author clearly state a thesis and go on to support it?
- Does the author identify specific examples from the script or production?
- Does the author stay clearly in the past tense?
- Did the author proofread carefully for proper grammar and misspelled words?
- Is paragraphing appropriate (parallel to changing ideas)?
- Is there a concluding paragraph?

Content 3 pts.

- Does the author clearly discuss topic(s) outlined in the prompt?
- Are there specific examples from the text/performance to support the argument?
- Is there unnecessary information (such as recounting the plot versus using plot points to support argument)?
- Is the information in the performance response essay accurate?
- Does the author balance their opinion/interpretation with concrete examples from the text/performance?
- Is the author concentrating on what was written or presented as opposed to what was missing or what they preferred to see?

Style and Flow 3 pts.

- Does the paper flow smoothly?
- Is there a clear and logical organization to the paper?
- Does the author make clean, logical transitions from idea to idea?
- Does the author use theatrical terms appropriately?
- Does the author clearly write for an appropriate audience (instructor and peers)?

1 “free floating point” to be used as + or – at the instructor’s discretion.

10= A 9=A- 8= B+ 7= B 6= B- 5= C+ 4= C 3= C- 2= D+ 1= D