

Orientation: Syllabus

“It is important to remember that a director’s work, as with any artist, is intuitive...Directing is about feeling, about being in the room with other people; with actors, with designers, with an audience. It is about having a feel for time and space, about breathing, and responding fully to the situation at hand, being able to plunge and encourage into the unknown at the right moment.”

-Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares*

Directing

Theatre 455

Course Syllabus, Fall 2023

Credits: 3

Professor: Brad Dell

Pronouns: He/Him/His


Course Time: Monday and Wednesday – 3:40 – 4:55 pm

Classroom: Carver 308

Office: Carver 310

E-mail: dellbrad@iastate.edu (<mailto:dellbrad@iastate.edu>)

Phone: 515.294.0184, 724.787.7639

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday: 1:30-3:00pm (Please schedule by Appointment [here](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BradDell@iowastate.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/)  [\(https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BradDell@iowastate.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/\)](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BradDell@iowastate.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/).)

Additional office hours may be scheduled by appointment. (Please schedule by Appointment via [here](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BradDell@iowastate.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/)  [\(https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BradDell@iowastate.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/\)](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BradDell@iowastate.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/).)

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Course Format

This course format will be entirely face to face. While no one should attend class if they are feeling ill, students are expected to be in class every day. Virtual accommodations will only be made in the case of illness.

Pedagogical strategies: active learning, group-work, team-based learning, discussion, and student-directed learning.

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Course Goals and Learning Objectives (CO)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students enrolled in this course will learn and develop skills in:

- Cultivating their artistic and creative vision.
- The director's role in the theatrical team.
- Analyzing scripts from the director's point of view.
- Preparation of a directing prompt book.
- Beat work.
- Staging, blocking, ground plans, and rehearsal procedures.
- Working with actors.
- Exploring the role theatre has to play in reflecting, challenging, and changing the world.
- Celebrating the human right to be creative.
- Leading a Team
- Practicing Empathy
- Engaging in Critical Thinking
- Collaborating as an artistic community to break down and solve the problems of directing.

At the completion of Theatre 455: Directing for the Stage, students will be able to:

- Analyze a play from the point of view of the director and formulate and articulate a director's concept statement
- Break down a play into beats and create a director's prompt book

- Discuss the best practices for director/actor/designer collaboration
- Plan, organize, and lead a production from auditions through rehearsals to a fully mounted public performance
- Begin to articulate how to view theatre's role in the broader context of contemporary society

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Course Materials

Required materials

- **Required Texts:**

The Director's Eye by John Ahart

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Learning Activities and Assessments

Learning Activities

To successfully complete this course, students will do the following:

- Read assigned chapters.
- Read assigned plays.
- Attend class and participate in discussions.
- Collaborate with one another on in class group projects
- Participate in discussion topics.
- Participate in assigned group projects.
- Complete response papers.
- Complete the final 10 Minute Play project.

Assessments

ASSIGNMENTS:

There will be small day to day assignments and readings which will be assigned throughout the semester. These will be announced both in class and available via Canvas.

Reading Assignments from *The Director's Eye*, in class working scripts, and supplemental sources will be assigned throughout the semester.

The Following are major projects, which will be assigned in full at a later date. After each of these projects, students will turn in a self-evaluation assessment/response paper via Canvas which will be factored into the grade for each project.

One Day Plays – Each student will direct two or three other students in a short scene that will be rehearsed and performed within one class period.

Composition Projects - Students will present in class projects focusing on composition and staging. (More details forthcoming.)

Contentless Scenes - Students will will serve as director for a contentless scene which they will direct and present during one class period. They will also serve as actors for their fellow classmates. They will write a response paper about the full experience of this project. Commitment, dedication, work ethic, positive attitude, memorization, and scene analyses are all components of your grade.

Each student will direct a 10 minute play for the final project, which will tentatively be performed in Fisher during December. Students are highly recommended to explore plays on the [New Play Exchange](https://instr.iastate.libguides.com/az.php?a=n) [↗ \(https://instr.iastate.libguides.com/az.php?a=n\)](https://instr.iastate.libguides.com/az.php?a=n), which is now available on the library website. It is strongly suggested that students explore plays written by women, trans, non-binary, and BIPOC playwrights. It is also suggested that your play has 2-3 actors. Play selection requires the instructor's approval. Please note that for a variety of reasons, students will be providing their own technical support. In addition to the presentation of the scene, the student will prepare a prompt book, script analysis, rehearsal blog and summary response. More details about those assignments are included in Canvas.

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Grading Policies

Grading Schema

Table 1. Letter grades in this course

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9

Letter Grade	Percentage
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	73-76.9
C-	70-72.9
D+	67-69.9
D	63-66.9
D-	60-62.9
F	<60%

You can accumulate points by participating in the following way:

Table 2. Grade Distribution

Participation area	Total Points
Assessment: One Day Play	100
Assessment: Contentless Scenes	100
Ten Minute Play Performance	200
Ten Minute Play Presentation	25
Ten Minute Play Beat work	25
Ten Minute Play Analysis	50

Participation area	Total Points
Ten Minute Play Response	50
In Class Participation	200

Grade Appeal Process

If you become concerned about your instructor's class management, please communicate your concerns with your instructor. Concerns sometimes relate to grading methods, paper turnaround time, and course policies, as examples. If you feel uncomfortable speaking with your instructor, contact Department Chair Don Simonson: [drs@iastate.edu \(mailto:drs@iastate.edu\)](mailto:drs@iastate.edu). Before you decide to appeal, check out [ISU's academic appeal process.](https://catalog.iastate.edu/academics/#academicgrievancesappealstext) (<https://catalog.iastate.edu/academics/#academicgrievancesappealstext>)

Appealing Your Final Grade

If you feel that your final grade does not reflect the quality of the work you produced throughout the semester, please first discuss the issue with your instructor. If, after talking with your instructor, you still feel that your grade does not reflect the quality of your work, you can file a grade appeal with [an appropriate person in the department and their contact info]. For a grade appeal, you will need to submit the following materials:

1. A memo explaining why your final grade does not reflect the quality of work you produced
2. All the work you completed during the semester (including major assignments and weekly assignments like discussions and workshops)
3. The course policies with grade breakdown

A panel of instructors will review your materials blindly and assign a grade based on the quality of the work. If the grade the panel assigns is higher than the grade you received, your grade will be changed accordingly. If, however, the grade the panel assigns is lower than the grade you received, your grade will remain the same.

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Course Policies

Feedback

All graded assessments will be returned with feedback within 14 days of the due date. Personalized feedback will be provided for each assignment and reflection. In addition, responses to common

questions and unclear content will be posted at the conclusion of each module. Comments will be posted at the conclusion of each discussion.

Missed and late coursework

Assignments must be turned on by the deadlines posted in Canvas. Late work is eligible for up to 75% of the original points.

Attendance

Attendance will benefit you in several ways. You will stay up to speed on all course content. You won't fall behind in any way. And since this class is mostly group projects you will maintain a positive presence for your collaborators. **YOUR CLASSMATES DEPEND ON YOU.** But please be mindful of

Expectations

ISU's Principles of Community

Students are responsible for living the tenets established in ISU's Principles of Community: Respect, Purpose, Cooperation, Richness of Diversity, Freedom from discrimination, and the Honest and respectful expression of ideas. Visit ISU's Principles of Community webpage

<http://bit.ly/isuprinciples> ↗ (<http://bit.ly/isuprinciples>).

Community Agreements:

As agreed upon by the class, the following community agreements will be relied upon throughout this course:


- Will be filled in after the first day of class.

Collaboration: It has been said that theatre is the most collaborative of art forms. In order to exercise this concept, this class will be set up as an artistic community, dependent on the participation and enthusiasm of each member for the success of the whole. In-class exercises, discussion and projects make up a major portion of this course. Subsequently, if a student fails to contribute by not speaking up or not attending, the student's participation grade will be penalized.

Name, Gender Identity and/or Gender Expression: Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Writing: Since this is a college level course, students are expected to write at a college level. Students are expected to hand in assignments that are neatly typed, double spaced with proper margins, correctly spelled, and grammatically correct. Points will be deducted for incorrect spelling and grammatical errors (including comma splices, run on sentences, sentence fragments, etc.).

Public Speaking: The ability of students to be efficient verbal communicators is of paramount importance to their success. Therefore, the many presentations included in this class will partly focus on cultivating the skill of verbal communication. Students will be expected to speak and present in an enthusiastic, professional, passionate, and educated manner.

- Steps to report illness via [ISU's Thielen Student Health Center's Class Excuse webpage](http://bit.ly/isu-class-excuse)  (<http://bit.ly/isu-class-excuse>).

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Course Calendar

The course summary with all due dates appears in the bottom half of the [Homepage](https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/101446/assignments/syllabus) (<https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/101446/assignments/syllabus>).

Table 3. Course Calendar

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
Mon. August 21	Introduction & What is a director? Establish Community Agreements	Begin Looking for 10 Minute Plays
Wed. August 23	The two wells from which the director draws...	Read AHART Ch. 1-4; Answer Question worksheet; Assign One Day Plays
Mon. August 28	One Day Plays Round 1	
Wed. August 30	One Day Plays Round 2	
Monday, Sept. 4	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS	
Wed. Sept. 6	One Day Plays Round 3	

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
Mon. Sept. 11	One Day Plays Wrap Up and Debrief	
Wed. Sept. 13	Working With Actors - No Brad	Read Ch. 22-24
Mon. Sept. 18	Working With Actors; Practice Side Coaching	
Wed. Sept. 20	Rehearsal Discussion	Read Ahart Chapters 5-10 One Day Plays Responses Due
Mon. Sept. 25	Discuss Ground Plans/Blocking/Composition	Read Ahart Ch. 25-31;
Wed. Sept. 27	Composition Project Day 1	Assign Contentless Scene Project
Mon. Oct. 2	Composition Project Day 2 and Prepare for Contentless Scenes	
Wed. Oct. 4	Contentless Scene Launch Day	
Mon. Oct. 9	Contentless Scenes Round 1	
Wed. Oct. 11	Contentless Scenes Round 2	
Mon. Oct. 16	Contentless Scenes Round 3	

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
Wed. Oct. 18	Contentless Scene Discussion and Debrief	
<i>Fri. Oct. 20 - 3:00 - 6:00pm</i>	<i>TEN MINUTE PLAY AUDITIONS</i>	
Mon. Oct. 23	Discuss Analysis, Discovery, Image and Concept Statements and Auditions	Read Ahart Ch. 11 and 14
Wed. Oct. 25	Discuss Beat Work/Rhythm, Tempo, and Prompt Books	Read Ahart Ch. 12 and 13
Mon. Oct. 30	Ten Minute Play Presentations	10 Minute Play Analysis Due
Wed. Nov. 1	Individual Meetings with Brad about 10 Minutes	Prompt Book and Ground Plan Due When you meet with Brad
Mon. Nov. 6	Individual Meetings with Brad about 10 Minutes	Prompt Book and Ground Plan Due when you meet with Brad
Wed. Nov. 8	Week 2 Check Ins - How is Staging Going?	
Mon. Nov. 13	Reorienting Directing	Read and Respond to Essays
Wed. Nov. 15	Week 4 Check In: How is actor coaching/Memorization going?	
Mon. Nov. 27	Prepare for 10 Minute Plays	
Wed. Nov. 29	Prepare for 10 Minute Plays	

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
Fri. Dec. 1 & Sat. Dec. 2 at 7:30pm	10 minute play festival performances in FISHER	
Mon. Dec. 4	Discuss 10 Minute Plays	
Wed. Dec. 6	Semester Wrap Up	
Final Week	10 Minute Play Response Papers Due	

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ISU Syllabus Statements

Academic Dishonesty

The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic dishonesty. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the [Dean of Students Office](#) (<http://www.dso.iastate.edu/ja/academic/misconduct.html>).

Accessibility Statement

Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. Students requesting accommodations for a documented disability are required to work directly with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes before accommodations will be identified. After eligibility is established, SAS staff will create and issue a Notification Letter for each course listing approved reasonable accommodations. This document will be made available to the student and instructor either electronically or in hard-copy every semester. Students and instructors are encouraged to review contents of the Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible to identify a specific, timely plan to deliver/receive the indicated accommodations. Reasonable

accommodations are not retroactive in nature and are not intended to be an unfair advantage. Additional information or assistance is available online at www.sas.dso.iastate.edu (<http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu/>), by contacting SAS staff by email at accessibility@iastate.edu (<mailto:accessibility@iastate.edu>), or by calling 515-294-7220. Student Accessibility Services is a unit in the Dean of Students Office located at 1076 Student Services Building.

Prep Week

This class follows the Iowa State University Prep Week policy as noted in section 10.6.4 of the [Faculty Handbook](http://www.provost.iastate.edu/resources/faculty-handbook) (<http://www.provost.iastate.edu/resources/faculty-handbook>).

Discrimination and Harassment

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Veteran. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Office of Equal Opportunity, 3410 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, Tel. 515-294-7612, Hotline 515-294-1222, email eooffice@iastate.edu (<mailto:eooffice@mail.iastate.edu>).

Free Expression

Iowa State University supports and upholds the [First Amendment protection of freedom of speech](https://www.studentconduct.dso.iastate.edu/know-the-code-resources/resources-for-students/harassment-and-free-speech/free-speech) (<https://www.studentconduct.dso.iastate.edu/know-the-code-resources/resources-for-students/harassment-and-free-speech/free-speech>) and the [principle of academic freedom](https://www.iowaregents.edu/plans-and-policies/board-policy-manual/310-academic-freedom) (<https://www.iowaregents.edu/plans-and-policies/board-policy-manual/310-academic-freedom>) in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

Academic Dishonesty

The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic misconduct ([5.1 in the Student Code of Conduct](https://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR) (<https://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR>)). Students are responsible for adhering to university policy and the expectations in the course syllabus and on coursework and exams, and for following directions given by faculty, instructors, and Testing Center regulations related to coursework, assessments, and exams. Anyone suspected of academic misconduct will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct in the Dean of Students Office](https://www.studentconduct.dso.iastate.edu/academic-misconduct/armfacultystaff) (<https://www.studentconduct.dso.iastate.edu/academic-misconduct/armfacultystaff>). Information about

academic integrity and the value of completing academic work honestly can be found in the [Iowa State University Academic Integrity Tutorial](https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/academicintegrity/). [↗ \(https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/academicintegrity/\)](https://iastate.pressbooks.pub/academicintegrity/)

Accessibility

Iowa State University is committed to advancing equity, access, and inclusion for students with disabilities. Promoting these values entails providing reasonable accommodations where barriers exist to students' full participation in higher education. Students in need of accommodations or who experience accessibility-related barriers to learning should work with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to identify resources and support available to them. Staff at SAS collaborate with students and campus partners to coordinate accommodations and to further the academic excellence of students with disabilities. Information about SAS is available online at www.sas.dso.iastate.edu (<http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu/>), by email at accessibility@iastate.edu, or by phone at 515-294-7220.

Discrimination and Harassment

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Veteran. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Office of Equal Opportunity, 3410 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, Tel. 515-294-7612, Hotline 515-294-1222, email eooffice@iastate.edu.

Mental Health and Well-Being Resources

Iowa State University is committed to proactively facilitating all students' well-being. Resources are available on the [ISU Student Health and Wellness website](https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/) (<https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/>) (<https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/> (<https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/>)).

Prep Week

This class follows the Iowa State University Prep Week policy as noted the ISU Policy Library; as well as section 10.6.4 of the Faculty Handbook. Visit the [ISU Policy Library website](https://www.policy.iastate.edu/) (<https://www.policy.iastate.edu/>) (<http://www.policy.iastate.edu/>) for policy wording.

Religious Accommodation

Iowa State University welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable

accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course. For students, you should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your professor at the earliest possible time. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students Office website \(https://dso.iastate.edu/\)](https://dso.iastate.edu/) (http://dso.iastate.edu/) or via phone 515-294-1020 or the [Office of Equal Opportunity website \(https://www.eoc.iastate.edu/\)](https://www.eoc.iastate.edu/) (https://www.eoc.iastate.edu/) or via phone 515-294-7612.

Contact Information for Academic Issues

If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above statements, email academicissues@iastate.edu.

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