

Course Syllabus

 Edit

Advanced Directing Syllabus

"Excellence as a product is inherently not in our hands, but the process is something directors can create."

[Arpita Mukherjee](https://arpitamukherjee-theatredirector.com/about)  (<https://arpitamukherjee-theatredirector.com/about>)

American Theatre and Film Director (and ISU 2019 Guest Artist in residence)

Course Description

Advanced practical and theoretical exploration in directing.

- **Course Name:** Advanced Directing
- **Department:** Theatre
- **Current Semester and Year:** Spring 2024
- **Credit Hours:** 3
- **Course Prerequisites:** THTRE 455
- **Course Meeting Time:** M/W 2:15 - 3:30
- **Course Format:** Face to Face

Instructor Information

Instructors: Amanda Petefish-Schrag and Tiffany Antone

Email: apschrag@iastate.edu (<mailto:apschrag@iastate.edu>) and tlantone@iastate.edu

Phone: 515-294-8179 (APS); 515-294-1144 (TA)

Office location: Carver 0318 (APS); Carver 0328 (TA)

Student hours: (on-campus/virtual)

- **Amanda Petefish-Schrag - T 11AM-1PM & W 10AM-NOON. Additional hours may be scheduled by appointment**
- **Tiffany Antone - T/Th 12:30-1:30PM and other times by appointment**

You can contact your instructors in the following ways:

- Send an email message or email through the Canvas email function. We typically check email at least twice a day during regular working hours on M-F, and are *usually* able to get back to you within a couple of hours.

Note: Emails received after 5PM will be responded to on the following weekday, and emails received on weekends will be responded to the following Monday.

- Set up a meeting using ISU Navigate, or email to set up a time. Meetings can be in person, via Zoom, or phone.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- **Apply Advanced Script Analysis Techniques:** *Students will employ advanced investigation methods to discern nuanced themes, symbols, motifs, subtexts, and character motivations, informing directorial decisions and enhancing the depth of storytelling in a production.*
- **Facilitate Collaborative Processes:** *Students will learn to lead collaborative rehearsal and development processes, integrating input from other team members. They will demonstrate the ability to foster an effective working environment that enhances artistic collaboration and recognizes the importance of collective problem solving.*
- **Create a Comprehensive Directing Practice:** *Through practical projects, students will develop advanced and holistic directing processes that effectively integrate skill sets such as dramaturgy, casting, visual and auditory storytelling, spatial relationships, and staging concepts. Students' processes will consider the unique circumstances of each project, aiming for coherence and depth of storytelling.*
- **Assess and Advocate Directorial Vision:** *Students will develop the ability to critically assess their own work and processes, gaining insight into their directorial choices. They will gain proficiency in effectively pitching projects, articulating their artistic vision, and justifying creative decisions to collaborators, fostering compelling and persuasive communication of their directorial ideas.*
- **Evaluate and Adapt Directing Approaches:** *Students will assess and adjust their directing methods based on feedback and project requirements. By fostering reflective and adaptive skills, they will actively participate in continuous professional development essential for the ever-*

changing and collaborative field of directing.

Course Materials

Throughout the course we will use articles, videos, essays, interviews, and various play scripts. These materials are accessible online and are included with the assignments and learning activities listed in the Modules and Assignments sections of Canvas.

Several plays used in the course can be found using *New Play Exchange*, which may be accessed through Parks Library using the following link: <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/iastate.edu?url=https://newplayexchange.org/dashboard> (<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/iastate.edu?url=https://newplayexchange.org/dashboard>).

Whether, digital or physical, it is vital that you, as a director, have a functional calendaring system for this course. Figure out now how you will stay on top of coursework/rehearsals, and commit to maintaining this calendar.

Learning Activities

"When you're directing, you're serving everybody - in the guise of acting like everybody's serving you. But you're really serving the materials. You're serving the actors. You're in charge, but it's not free."

[George C. Wolfe](https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/george-c-wolfe-1954/)  (<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/george-c-wolfe-1954/>)

American theatre and film director; former Artistic Director of The Public Theatre

In this Advanced Directing course, you will deepen your study of directing by engaging in a blend of analytical, immersive, and collaborative activities and projects. Specific details for each of these activities can be found in the course modules. To successfully complete this course, you will be expected to:

Adapt and Embrace Continuous Learning:

- Lead with curiosity rather than assumptions.
- Prepare fully for each class session. Ask questions in your preparation and bring questions to class sessions.
- Actively assess and adjust directing methods based on feedback and project requirements

Organize Time and Resources Effectively:

- Establish a structured approach to time management for course activities and projects, creating schedules that allocate dedicated time for script analysis, project work, and collaborative activities.
- Prioritize tasks and projects based on deadlines and requirements, ensuring efficient organization, communication, and execution of directing responsibilities.

Engage in Script Analysis:

- Devote time to assigned script analysis activities as well as scripts you choose independently,.
- Participate in discussions in and outside of class with peers or mentors to refine analytical skills and gain diverse perspectives on script interpretation.

Prepare and Participate Actively in Collaborative Processes:

- Take an active role in assigned collaborative planning and development processes, (including class participation). Integrate feedback from team members.
- Cultivate an open and inclusive environment during in and outside-of-class working sessions and rehearsals, encouraging collective problem-solving and creative input from all collaborators.

Apply Directing Practices to Class Activities and Projects:

- Engage in in-depth preparation and planning for all course activities and projects, integrating the specific directing processes and skill sets from previous and current directing course work.
- Tailor approach to each project to the specific circumstances

Reflect and Critique Regularly:

- Evaluate personal work and directing processes regularly through both assigned reflection/critique activities and informal self evaluation and reflection.
- Seek and take note of feedback from peers and instructors to enhance awareness and refine directorial skills. Be prepared to take notes on feedback during all in-class critiques.
- Provide clear and reflective responses to the work of other assigned artists (including attendance and responses to all ISU spring semester productions) and peers.

Practice Effective Communication Skills:

- Be clear and specific in your communication within written and verbal course communication including class discussions, responses, and critiques.
- Incorporate terminology learned in this (and previous) directing courses within your communication. Define any terms or concepts that may be unfamiliar to your collaborators or readers.

Grading Policies

Grade Distribution

You can accumulate points by participating in the following way:

Grade Distribution

Participation area	Total Points Possible
Orientation and Preliminary Assessment Activities	1-35 pts
Class Preparation and In-Class (Attendance) Activities	1-350 pts
Director's Toolbox Activities and Projects	1-150 pts
Synthesis Projects	1-300 pts
Critiques and Process Reflections	1-250 pts
Immersion and Enrichment Activities (OPTIONAL)	1-75 pts
<i>Total Points Possible</i>	1160 pts

Grading Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Letter Grade	Points Accrued
A	930 pts and above
A-	900-929 pts
B+	870-899 pts

B	830-869 pts
B-	800-829 pts
C	730-769 pts
C-	700-729 pts
D+	670-699 pts
D	630-669 pts
D-	600-629 pts
F	<60 pts

Course Policies

“I believe in serendipity, but I also believe there are times when you have to be the one who lines up everything so it can fall into place.”

[Susan Stroman](https://www.susanstroman.com/about)  <https://www.susanstroman.com/about>

American theatre & film director, choreographer

Preparation, Attendance, & Participation

Expectations for attendance and preparation in this course underscore the director's role as a leader and facilitator of collaborative experiences. A director's responsibilities extend beyond individual projects to encompass the organization of group dynamics, including group time. Punctual and consistent attendance is crucial for the success of both the individual and the entire class.

Recognizing the interconnected nature of the learning experience, your commitment to being

prepared and present enhances the quality of the shared educational journey for all students. Prepare all required materials beforehand for in-class activities, such as discussions and workshops. Unavoidable absences should be communicated promptly to maintain a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

Missing class will impact your grade both directly and indirectly. Approximately 35% (or 350 points in the course) of your grade is directly linked to course attendance and preparation. Excessive absences may result in being removed from key collaborative projects (resulting in a zero grade for the project) or being dropped from the course.

In the case that you -

- must miss a class or other course activities and assignments due to illness or other valid reasons,
- do not fully meet the objectives of a learning activity, or
- seek additional experience with a particular content area or learning objective,

- you have the option to complete extra or additional activities listed within the module course menus (under "Immersion & Enrichment Activities") to supplement your learning and course points. Feel free to consult with your instructors if you need assistance in choosing activities that align with your learning goals and needs.

Note: Practice care for yourself and your community by staying home if you are ill or potentially contagious. You do not need to provide a doctor or nurse's note or other documentation if you need to miss a class for illness or medical emergency.

Missed and late coursework

Similar to the above, as a director, meeting deadlines is paramount to the success of collaborative projects. Adhering to deadlines is crucial not only for the successful completion of individual directorial tasks but also for fostering a collaborative atmosphere that respects the time and contributions of all team members. Meeting deadlines is an essential skill set for a director, and your commitment to this principle will greatly enhance the overall success of the class.

Late projects will be accepted (unless directly connected to a presentation or group activity), **but with a five percent grade reduction per day late**. Work submitted more than two weeks past the original due date can no longer count toward your point totals.

Feedback, Critique, and Communication

Applying and providing feedback and critique are fundamental components of the director's skill set, and they play a crucial role in the learning outcomes of this course. Engaging in constructive discussions and offering considered feedback to peers are essential aspects of the collaborative directing process. To maximize the benefits of critiques, students should actively participate, both as givers and receivers of feedback. Additionally, taking detailed notes during oral critiques is essential

for understanding and implementing feedback, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This practice not only aids in personal growth as a director but also contributes to the overall development of a supportive and collaborative learning environment within the class.

*For additional detail and specifics on course communication and critique policies see **COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES** (<https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/106270/pages/communication-guidelines>) in the course orientation module.*

Graded assessments from the instructors will be returned within 10 days of the due date. Personalized feedback will be provided for each learning project with more than 25 pts attached. This feedback may be in written or oral form depending on the learning activity (see Canvas assignment descriptions for more detail).

All communication and interactions within the course should adhere to university standards of Effective Communication Practices. (<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/netiquette-at-isu/>) Specifically, communication should be scholarly, respectful, and courteous in nature. You are expected to follow ISU's Principles of Community (<https://www.diversity.iastate.edu/connect/principles>).

Your Name and Identity

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name. Please advise us accordingly early in the semester so that we can make appropriate changes to our records.

This can also be done via the Student Inventory in the **Orientation Module** (<https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/97939/modules/643198>).

Class Climate and Content Warnings

All of us should feel responsible for creating a space that exemplifies the tenets of ISU's Principles of Community: Respect, Purpose, Cooperation, Richness of Diversity, Freedom from discrimination, and the Honest and respectful expression of ideas.

Our course readings and discussions will often involve mature, and potentially challenging topics. In these interactions, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

"Limitations force you to find the essence of what you want to say, which is one of the most important things to know for an artist."

Julie Taymor  (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/35-who-made-a-difference-julie-taymor-115538544/>)

American Theatre, Opera and Film Director

Required ISU Syllabus Statement

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.

Additional ISU Syllabus Statements

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/>).

Accessibility Statement

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](https://sas.dso.iastate.edu) (<https://sas.dso.iastate.edu>), by email at accessibility@iastate.edu (<mailto: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

<mailto:eooffice@mail.iastate.edu>

Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources

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

Prep Week

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

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 a 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 \(https://www.studentassistance.dso.iastate.edu/\)](https://www.studentassistance.dso.iastate.edu/) at 515-294-1020 or the [Office of Equal Opportunity \(https://www.eoc.iastate.edu/\)](https://www.eoc.iastate.edu/) at 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 (<mailto:academicissues@iastate.edu>)

(Important note to faculty: The email address for contact information is monitored and answered through the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost)

Disclaimer: The information in this syllabus is subject to change in extenuating circumstances. Changes to the course syllabus will be provided in writing and announced via course-wide announcements.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Fri Jan 19, 2024	 Celebratory Syllabus Quiz! (https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/106270/assignments/2205981)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jan 21, 2024	 Directing Skills/Knowledge Assessment (https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/106270/assignments/2185647)	due by 11:59pm
	 Goal Setting (https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/106270/assignments/2185461)	due by 11:59pm