

Orientation: Syllabus

THTRE 456: ADVANCED DIRECTING

Course Information

'MAKE MISTAKES': 'If you're not prepared to be wrong you'll never come up with anything original' – Sir Ken Robinson

'Creativity is like a cat – you can't MAKE IT come to you. In order to catch it you sometimes have to walk away from it' – Improbable Theatre

'Life is what happens when you're making other plans' – John Lennon

"At a certain point I think you have to take control of "it" and make it this vision. So whatever is made will be good, because you're good... Trust that it'll be good because you're good at what you do... allow it to be bad for a very, very long time. It has to be bad for a very long time before it can be good."

-How to Be A Generative Theatre Artist, Howlround

Directing II

Theatre 456

Course Syllabus, Spring, 2022

Professor: Brad Dell

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Course Time: Monday and Wednesday, 3:40-5:00 pm **Classroom:** Carver 308

Office: Carver 310 **E-mail:** dellbrad@iastate.edu (<mailto:dellbrad@iastate.edu>)

Phone: 294-0184, 724.787.7639

Office Hours: M-F 1:00-3:00pm

Additional office hours can be scheduled by appointment.

Course Description: This course will be a laboratory for theatrical creation where students will experience the process of collaborating to produce a fully realized One Act play as well as devised/generative theatre. We will focus on ensemble, storytelling, creativity, collaboration, and world building. We will explore devising techniques and professional practices. And then, prompted by various circumstances students will collaborate to create dynamic theatrical events that tell stories, evoke emotions, engage the senses, and inhabit unique worlds.

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.

[Back to top](#)

Course Format

This course is a face to face course.

[Back to top](#)

Course Goals and Learning Objectives (CO)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will engage in Devised Theatre exercises and Direct a fully mounted One Act Play in order:

- to further sharpen skills developed in Directing I, including beat work, working with actors, director's concept, tempo, rhythm, and mood analysis
- to further explore and hone skills in movement, picturization, and blocking
- to practice skills in rehearsal techniques
- to focus on creating an entirely unique world in which each play/scene can take place

- to practice the collaborative process of working together as actors, directors, designers, and theatremakers
- to have the practical experiences of fully mounting a one-act play
- to strengthen skills in critical thinking, leadership, collaboration, and empathy
- to continue to develop a personal artistic voice by pinpointing stylistic and aesthetic preferences
- to gain exposure to new plays, people, personal history, and experiences, in order to become a more well-rounded and informed theatre artist
- to work as an artistic community in developing the skills of directing

Learning Objectives:

After the completion of Theatre 456, students will be able to:

- Articulate their own unique directing/theatre style and theory
- Identify the relevancy of their artistic work in regard to current social, political, and/or local events
- Plan, organize, and lead a production from auditions through rehearsals to a fully mounted public performance
- Collaborate with fellow artists to put together a theatrical product
- Evaluate and analyze their own growth and learning, as well as the growth and learning of their classmates

[Back to top](#)

Course Materials

- Readings supplied via Canvas
- Three Ring Binder (for One Act Play Prompt Book)

[Back to top](#)

Learning Activities and Assessments

Learning Activities

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

- Read assigned readings.
- Participate in discussion topics.
- Participate in assigned group projects.
- Rehearse outside of class for the One Act Play.
- Rehearse in class for in class projects.
- Participate in production meetings and auditions.
- Complete Contemporary Director Research Presentation
- Complete response papers and self evaluations.
- Complete the project reflection.

[Back to top](#)

Grading Policies

Grading Schema

Table 1. Letter grades in this course

Letter Grade	Points	Percentage
A		93-100
A-		90-92
B+		87-89
B		83-86
B-		80-82
C+		77-79
C		73-76
C-		70-72

Letter Grade	Points	Percentage
D+		67-69
D		64-66
D-		60-63
F		<60%

Student can accumulate points via successful completion of the following projects:

Devised Theatre Projects: Students will collaborate on a variety of devised theatre projects throughout the semester

One Act Play: Each student will direct a one-act play of their choosing, to be performed in Fisher during finals week. A fully detailed prompt book and analysis will accompany this project. Students will be graded on process via online blog entries, progress via a check in a week or two before the performance as well as the final product. Students will also be required to attend the rehearsal and give feedback to at least two other students' One Act. In addition, students will participate in weekly production meetings with student designers as well as bi-weekly check ins with the instructor about their plays.

Contemporary Director/Devising Ensembles Research Presentation: Choose a contemporary Director or Devising Ensemble to research and give a presentation.

Personal Theory/Artistic Mission Statement: At the end of the semester, you will write and present to the class your personal artistic mission statement.

[Back to top](#)

Course Policies

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> [.\(http://bit.ly/isuprinciples\)](http://bit.ly/isuprinciples).

Community Agreements:

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

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.

Play Attendance: You must attend the performances of the ISU mainstage season. Class discussions will be held on all mainstage plays.

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. Active, engaged, and passionate participation is the central requirement of this course. The class will determine the community agreements that govern our work together.

Attendance: Attendance and promptness are a requirement for all theatre classes. The collaborative nature of theatre requires commitment of all individuals to the group. Punctuality is also key to the health of your career in the professional theatre. Attendance will not be taken in this class. But failure to attend class will drastically impact your success in the course and most importantly the success of your fellow collaborators.

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, grammatically correct, and stapled. Major 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 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.

Canvas – Most written assignments will be turned in as PDFs via Canvas. Please let me know if you have any questions or difficulties with this process. Also, some class readings will be posted on Canvas.

[Back to top](#)

Course Calendar

The course summary with all due dates appears in the bottom half of the [Homepage](https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/88582/assignments/syllabus) (<https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/88582/assignments/syllabus>)

Table 3. Course Calendar

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
1/19	Intro to Course and One Act Planning - Production Staff Included	
1/24	First Production Meeting with Designers - Directors give presentations	One Act Analysis and Image Collage Presentations
1/26	Auditions	Audition Sides Due
1/31	Production Meeting	
2/2	Group Discussion About Start of Rehearsals	
2/7	Production Meeting	Week 1 Blog Due
2/9	Individual Meetings with Brad	
2/14	Production Meeting	Week 2 Blog Due
2/16	Individual Meetings with Brad	
2/21	Production Meeting	Week 3 Blog Due
2/23	Individual Meetings with Brad	

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
2/28	NO CLASS - TECH WEEK	Week 4 Blog Due
3/2	NO CLASS - TECH WEEK	
3/7	ONE ACT WRAP UP DISCUSSION	
3/9	WHAT IS DEVSING?	COMPLETE CANVAS RESPONSE: "What is Devised?"
3/14	SPRING BREAK	
3/16	SPRING BREAK	
3/21	Discuss Your Self-Launch Analysis and Where we go from here.	Submit Self-Launch Analysis to Canvas
3/23	Discuss "Ensemble Devising" and Begin Devising Fundamentals Exploration - Weight, Time, Rhythm, Space	Submit Discussion Response to Canvas
3/28	Explore Fundamentals - Movement and Gesture	
3/30	Explore Fundamentals - Gesture and Text	
4/4	Discuss "The Generative Generation" Devised Project	Discussion Response Due to Canvas

Date	Learning Activities	What's Due
4/6	Explore Devised Prompt	
4/11	Explore Devised Prompt	
4/13	Explore Devised Prompt	
4/18	Contemporary Director/Ensemble Presentations	
4/20	Contemporary Director/Ensemble Presentations	
4/25	Explore Devised Prompt	
4/27	Explore Devised Prompt	
5/2	Explore Devised Prompt	
5/4	Explore Devised Prompt	
Final	Group Discussion - Thursday, May 12, 2:15-4:15pm	Final Response Paper and Personal Theory Due

[Back to top](#)

Recommended and Required ISU Syllabus Statement

View Required and Recommended ISU Syllabus Statements via the Syllabus Statements option on your left-hand Canvas course navigation. Syllabus statements are developed by Iowa State University to communicate a consistent message to all students about strategic policies that impact their experience and make students aware of available campus resources.

[Back to top](#)