Advanced Directing
THR 428 - Section 001

Spring 2018

Department: School of Theatre

Instructor: Prof. Scott Shattuck
E-mail: shattucksh@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936 468-1336 (office), 917 860-6180 (mobile)
Office: Griffith Fine Arts Building, room 204
Office Hours: MWF 11:00 am-12:00 noon or make appointment

Class Meetings: GFNA 300 (Upstage Theatre)
Tuesdays 12:30-1:45 pm
Thursdays 12:30-1:45 pm
Additional labs to be arranged at mutually convenient times
Rehearsal times to be scheduled by each student, with instructor attending at least one

In addition to regular class meetings and individual preparation (traditional “homework”) time, this course requires a substantial amount of rehearsal time that must be arranged with student actors, and, in lieu of traditional mid-term and final exams, performances of two versions of a scene that must be scheduled to accommodate student actors and multiple faculty members. To facilitate this process, every student must be prepared to accept scheduling mandated by the instructor and the School of Theatre faculty, including evening and weekend work times.

The presentation of scenes will be at 2:00 pm Sunday, May 6, 2016.

Texts:

REQUIRED: A Sense of Direction by William Ball
RECOMMENDED: How to Read a Play by Damon Kiely

Other reading will be provided on-line, or in the form of handouts.

Course Description: Study of problems related to the directing of period plays.
Prerequisites: THR 421.
Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s) Supported in this Course:

1. The student will be able to analyze a script in ways that are necessary to a theatre practitioner or scholar/critic. (BA, BA with Teacher Certification [BATC], BFA)
2. The student will demonstrate an understanding of theatre history and a variety of theatrical styles. (BA, BATC, BFA)
3. The student will demonstrate collaborative and/or leadership competencies appropriate to participate or take a leadership role in an effective theatrical production. (BA, BATC, BFA)
4. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their interrelationships. (BA, BATC, BFA)
5. The student will be able to form and articulate a critical analysis and evaluation of a work of theatre. (BA, BATC)
6. The student will demonstrate intermediate to advanced competence in one or more theatre specialization(s). (BA)
7. The student will be able to use an understanding of educational psychology and appropriate organizational skills to create a positive and disciplined learning environment for students of theatre. (BATC)
8. The student will be able to complete and document a major project as a stage manager, as a designer or technician, or as an actor or director, demonstrating advanced competence in the student’s specialty. (BFA)
9. The student will be able to present an effective presentation appropriate to the student’s specialization. (BFA)

Student Learning Outcomes from this Course:

When you successfully complete this course, you will be able to:

1. Analyze a pre-realistic play in ways that support successful production and understanding of productions. (Supports PLO #1)
2. Demonstrate a practical and intellectual grasp of a contemporary mainstream approach to classical theatre and of at least one major approach to anti-realistic stylization. (Supports PLO’s #2 and 9)
3. Communicate style, collaborate with other theatre artists, and play a leadership role in a theatrical team in the successful mounting of contemporary mainstream and stylized presentations of a scene from a pre-realistic play. (Supports PLO’s #3, 6, 7 and 8)
4. Integrate text, performance, space, staging and workshop-scale production values into a unified scene. (Supports PLO #4)
5. Think critically and analytically about approaches to dramatic storytelling, and articulate complex and detailed artistic and factual ideas and information, both orally and in writing. (Supports PLO’s #2, 3, 4, and 5)
6. Provide persuasive documentation of a well-prepared and successfully presented scene from a pre-realistic play. (Supports PLO #9)
Course Requirements:

1. Consistent, active, productive, collaborative participation. To succeed in this course you must be alert and engaged, well prepared (having completed reading assignments on time), willing and able to participate in class exercises, cooperative, supportive and respectful of your fellow students in every class session. The instructor's assessment of your participation will form 15% of your final grade for the course. Upon request you may receive a mid-term assessment of your participation. Any pattern of tardiness or absenteeism may have a negative effect on your participation grade (as few as three absences or three times late for class may be considered a pattern).

2. A written critique (also called a “review”) describing and analyzing the direction of Biedermann and the Firebugs. The critique should be about two pages in length. In order to write it, you will purchase a ticket for and attend the production at least once. If you cannot afford a ticket, you should sign up to usher. If you have a cast, staff, or crew assignment, you will still describe and analyze the direction, from the perspective of your function within the production. If you miss the production you will receive no credit (a score of 0, a grade of F) for that critique. Also, three oral critiques of other productions or media events (an opera, a reading in the Festival of New American Plays, and a current film) that will be identified in class. These critiques will take the form of class discussions, but you will be evaluated on your contribution to the discussion. Your written critique will be worth twice as much as each oral critique and the weighted average will make up 5% of your final course grade.

3. Paper staging project. You will be assigned a short scene from a play from classical dramatic literature. Using criteria developed in class, analyze the scene, develop a ground plan for it, and design the blocking for the scene. To the extent possible you will be able to see your staging using fellow students from this course as “actors.” You will be evaluated based on the appropriateness and dynamism of your blocking and your written and oral explanations of your choices. 5%

4. Independent research and oral reports. Find and read a substantial article describing the work of a prominent (successful or unsuccessful) leader, and summarize it in a complete, clear, concise, well organized oral report to the class that relates your conclusions from this reading to the work of the director. Also, research the production history of a pre-20th century play (chosen by the instructor). Then present your research in a complete, clear, concise, well-organized and well-documented oral report in class and lead a discussion about the play. Finally, research the artistic work and underlying ideas of an innovative and influential 20th or 21st century director (also chosen by the instructor). Then present your research in class, and lead a discussion. You must provide your written notes to the professor before each presentation. The first of these is worth
3%, the second 8% and the third 9%, for a total of 20% of your final course grade.

Each of the following assignments relates to the scenes that you will direct as your major project for the semester:

5. **Play analysis and scene score.** Read a classical play selected by the instructor and analyze it by answering a series of questions (provided by the instructor) about it. The results will comprise a paper about five pages long. This will be due before you begin other work on your directing scene and will not be accepted after the first rehearsal. Next, prepare a script annotated for performance, called a “score,” for a scene from that same play. The form of your score will be prescribed by the instructor (you will need access to a photocopier, a pair of scissors, some blank paper, invisible tape or glue stick, a stapler, an erasable pencil—not ink pen—and an eraser). A draft of your score must be available for the instructor to see before you start rehearsal on your scene. Your final score will become part of your prompt book and will not be accepted late. 15%.

6. **Collaboration.** You will collaborate with other students in the class on the production and presentation of the scene event, and you may be required to collaborate with students from at least one other course. Your collaboration will be evaluated based on your reliability, promptness, cooperativeness, enthusiasm, and leadership, with information drawn from collaborating students as well as the instructor’s observations. **Failure to do your part to ensure the success of another student’s scene in a completely reliable way and to the best of your ability will result in a failing grade for the entire course; otherwise, 5% of final grade.**

7. **Directing scenes.** Direct two versions of a scene—one in a contemporary mainstream style and one based on the style of the director(s) you reported on earlier in the semester—from the play you were assigned to analyze, using as your cast actors from pools prescribed by the instructor. To facilitate this process, you will be required to cooperate in a process and adapt to a schedule designed by the instructor and the School of Theatre faculty. Your scenes must conform to guidelines provided by the instructor. Your scenes will be rehearsed at times arranged by you and in spaces found by you in the final weeks of the semester and performed at a time outside of regularly scheduled class times. Leadership and collaboration are essential to the nature of directing, so it follows that your success on this project is dependent to some extent on other people. By taking this course you are embracing this fact and setting out to succeed as a leader of a collaborative process. Your scenes must be presented on schedule and will not be accepted late. **25% of final grade.**

8. **Prompt books.** Using your scene score as a basis, prepare a notebook documenting the conceptualization, planning and staging of your scene in each of its two versions (this will require more photocopying, and a small loose-leaf
binder). The form of your prompt scripts will be prescribed by the instructor, and will each include a ground plan, casting plan, rehearsal schedule, visual plan for staging and plots of all production values (sets, props, costumes, lighting, sound, etc.). A draft of your prompt book must be available for the instructor to see before you start blocking your scene. Your final prompt book will be due at the performance of your scene and will not be accepted late. 10%.

Grading Policy

For clarity, each assignment or other course requirement is given a numerical score on the following scale:

- A+ 97-100
- A 93-96
- A- 90-92
- B+ 87-89
- B 83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C 73-76
- C- 70-72
- D+ 67-69
- D 63-66
- D- 60-62
- F 0-59

The final grade is then calculated using the percentages in the “Requirements” section above, and the numerical weighted average is translated to this letter-grade scale:

- 89.500-100 A
- 79.500-89.499 B
- 69.500-79.499 C
- 59.500-69.499 D
- 0-59.499 F

Course Calendar (subject to change):

- Week 1: Overview of the course
- Week 2: Strategies for success and “Resonant Leadership”
- Week 3: Oral reports on leadership case studies
- Week 4: Staging and the classics
- Week 5: The critic and the director
- Week 6: Production history and the nature of style
- Week 7: Text analysis and spoken verse
- Week 8: “Contemporary mainstream” Shakespeare

Spring Break

- Week 9: Oral reports on production history of Shakespeare plays
- Week 10: The origin of anti-realism (and Easter)
- Week 11: Anti-realism and stylization of Shakespeare
- Week 12: Oral reports on anti-realistic directors/styles
- Week 13: Oral reports on anti-realistic directors/styles
Week 14: Production meetings
Week 15: Rehearsals and rehearsal visits

**Sunday, May 8: (all day): final rehearsals and scene presentations**
*There will be no final examination per-se, but we will meet once during finals week at a time to be arranged for mutual convenience.*

**Attendance Policy**
In keeping with the School of Theatre policy (see the *Handbook*), the following applies to this course:

“A career in the fine arts demands dedication and discipline; preparation for this career requires conscientious development of effective work habits. To this end, regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories and other activities for which a student is registered or assigned.

“I. It is University policy to excuse students from class attendance for certain reasons related to health, family emergencies, student working the Performing Arts Series, and other situations of similar importance.

“Excused absences from Theatre classes will only be granted upon presentation of written documentation upon the first day of the student’s return from the teacher, sponsor or physician involved. In the case of absences caused by University-sponsored events, inclusion in the University’s public listing of such absences will constitute an official excuse. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence.

“II. A total of seven excused and/or unexcused absences in Tuesday-Thursday classes… will result in the student receiving a failing grade. Excessive unexcused absences will affect your grade. [More than two unexcused absences are considered excessive in this course.]

“III. The student will be allowed a maximum of two unexcused absences in Tuesday-Thursday classes….

“IV. In the case of missed classes, the student will be held responsible for the successful completion of assigned work and/or projects.”

In addition, please note that in this course, three instances or tardiness and/or early departure from class are considered equal to an unexcused absence.

**Academic Honesty Policy**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.
Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

In keeping with the School of Theatre policy (see the Handbook), the following applies in this course:

“‘It is the responsibility of the student to abstain from cheating. Dishonesty of any kind with respect to examinations, written assignments, in or out of class, alteration of records, or illegal possession of current examinations or keys to examinations shall be considered cheating….Courtesy and honesty require that any ideas or materials borrowed from another must be fully acknowledged [NB. “another” includes any Internet resource]. Offering the work of another [including an anonymous or group Internet author] as one’s own is plagiarism. The subject matter of ideas thus taken from another may range from a few sentences or paragraphs to entire articles copied from books, periodicals, or the writing of other students [or web sites]. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgement is also considered plagiarism. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas or materials taken from another is guilty of plagiarism.’

“The School of Theatre expects students to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Misrepresenting someone’s work as your own or knowingly allowing someone else to represent your work as his/hers constitutes academic dishonesty. Such behavior is antithetical to our work as scholars, as artists, and as members of a community founded on trust and mutual respect. It is an insult to faculty and an affront to honest students.

“Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from failure of a specific project to failure of the course, suspension from the production season for up to one year, and referral to university authorities for further action, which may include suspension or expulsion from the university.”

It is the student’s responsibility to know the definition of plagiarism and to avoid unintentional as well as intentional plagiarism. In this course, unintentional plagiarism will be treated no differently from intentional cheating. All of your work must be your own original work (unless appropriately cited). In recent years professional directors have successfully asserted legal ownership of staging. In other words, it is possible to
plagiarize another director’s concept, blocking or other ideas. This too is a form of cheating and carries all of the consequences described above.

**Guidelines for Written Work**
Except where otherwise instructed, whenever it is reasonable to expect it, written work such as critiques, play analyses and casting breakdowns should be word-processed and submitted as a hard copy (on paper, not on disk, by e-mail or other digital transmission). It should be printed in black ink on regular white copier/printer paper in a widely-used, highly readable font such as Times New Roman, no less than 10 nor more than 12-point size, with margins of approximately one inch. In other words, it should look much like this document except that it should be printed on only one side of the page and it should be double spaced. It should have your name word-processed on the front page (no title page is necessary). (For more details on standards for college papers in the arts and humanities, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.) Unless otherwise specified, due dates refer to the scheduled class start time.

**Policy on Disruptive Behavior**
According to the SFASU *General Bulletin*, “A student enrolling in the university assumes an obligation to conduct himself/herself in a manner compatible with the university’s function as an educational institution.” In this course, you must uphold the highest standards of respect for the teaching and learning process. Any behavior that distracts from our educational or artistic work, or would cause a reasonable person working as instructor or student in this setting to be distracted, will not be tolerated. This includes whispering or talking out of turn or making other distracting sounds at any level of volume, no matter how low, or making irrelevant or inappropriate gestures or signs of any kind, no matter how small, or using devices, no matter how discreetly. If you engage in such behavior, you will receive one warning from the instructor. If the same behavior or any other disruptive behavior occurs after a warning, you will be required to leave the class immediately, counted absent (unexcused) from the class, and held responsible for assigned work and/or projects. You will have to satisfy the instructor that you intend to behave appropriately for the rest of the semester before returning for the next class meeting. Any disruptive behavior after one ejection will result in a failing grade for the course; you will not be permitted to return for the rest of the semester. Serious conduct violations will also be referred to university authorities for further action.

**Policy on Use of Devices**
Devices such as computers, tablets, and “smart” phones may be used only to facilitate research, note-taking, and other work directly related to the shared work of the group during class, audition, rehearsal and performance time. Use of other telecommunication devices and entertainment (such as gaming) devices is prohibited; all such devices must be turned off and placed inside an appropriate container such as a case or bag for the entire duration of each session. Any extraneous use of a device, even discreetly and silently, will be considered disruptive behavior (see above). Telecommunication devices, alerts and alarms must be silenced to prevent any possible interruption of class, rehearsal or performance. If anything such as a telephone ringtone, alert or alarm accidentally sounds, it must be immediately silenced and ignored (any pattern of such interruptions,
even if inadvertent, will be considered disruptive behavior). Distracting behaviors such as posting on or reading social media, texting or other messaging, game-playing or other use of devices in class will result in at least a reduction in the participation grade and may result in a failing semester grade for the course and permanent expulsion from the class. Do not risk distracting yourself, the instructor, other students, or actors, even if you believe what you are doing is discreet.

**Policy on Late Work**
When an assignment’s scheduling affects other students (scenes with student actors and/or student audiences, for example), they are never accepted late if the change of schedule might inconvenience or affect the work of others. Written work that must be completed in sequence to build for success on a complex project is never accepted after the due date for the next assignment in the sequence. Individual written assignments such as critiques may be accepted late at the instructor’s discretion, but the grade on the assignment will always be affected negatively (the later it is, the larger the penalty), and the instructor will always make it his top priority to be fair to students that submitted their work in on time.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).