
TH - 5313

History of Directing

Spring 2019 - - Monday 11am - 1:30pm

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Office Hours: Monday 2-3:30, Tuesday 12:30-2:30. Email for appointment.



Texas State University, Department of Theatre and Dance 2019

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Introduction

*“to create theatre that is full of terror, beauty, love, and belief in
the innate human potential for change.”*

-Anne Bogart

William W. Lewis PhD, is a scholar, teacher, and theatre maker. Will's research and practice focuses on pushing the boundaries of performance through the integration of digital technologies as participatory tools. He examines performance using alternative and devised forms of storytelling that include site specificity, locative media, gaming, projection, and virtual reality. Will received a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder, a MA in Theatre History and Criticism from CUNY/Hunter College, and a BFA in Performance with an emphasis in directing and performance art from the University of Memphis. He has been a member of the Attic Theatre Company in Los Angeles and First Look Theatre Company housed inside NYU's Department of Dramatic Writing where he worked with MFA playwrights. Will has also worked as an independent film and theatre practitioner in NYC, Los Angeles, and regionally. Selected professional directing credits include *A Doll's House*, *Sight Unseen*, *The Dumbwaiter*, *Runaways*, and *All in the Timing*. His recent directing projects at the University of Colorado that implemented technology, devised performance, and physical theatre include *Woyzeck: The Endless Cycle 1.0*, *Everyman*, *Quantified Self*, and *Medea: Mediated*. *Woyzeck* was selected as a KCACTF Region 7 finalist in 2016 and *Quantified Self* was funded by a prestigious Knight Foundation Media Innovation Grant. You can find examples of Will's production work and publications at: www.williamwlewis.net

Philosophy

I believe that the goal of education is not necessarily for me to teach you exactly what I know, but rather to act as a guide allowing you agency to learn in your own way. Each student has different needs and abilities and I attempt to match my knowledge and experiences to fit those needs. Every student has varying levels of talent, intelligence, and ability, but it is what they do with their given assets that count. Curiosity, motivation, and discipline to excel will ultimately determine how successful you will be in coursework and in life. I expect students to come prepared and willing to ask questions about the work as well as how they interact with the world. I will do my best to encourage your curiosity and show you how and where to find the answers to your questions. I believe there are few wrong answers as long as students take the time and effort to think critically and consciously. We may not always agree in the class, but out of the disagreement, usually fruitful discussion will result. Most importantly, I believe the necessity of taking responsibility for one's actions and being a thoughtful and respectful citizen of the world.

Course Guidelines

Course Description

This course covers a historical survey of the role of the director from antiquity to the contemporary era. The focus is on influential directors, directing methods, directing theory, and the context in which they emerged.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to give MFA directing students a working understanding of the evolution of the the practice of directing. An emphasis will be placed on the social, political, cultural, and economic contextualization of the era in which particular directors worked and new directorial approaches formed.

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop an understanding of the historical trajectory of the role of the director
- Gain an ability to contextualize a director's work within any specific historical moment
- Articulate a directoral style in conceptualization formats
- Synthesize theoretical frameworks that inform particular directorial choices
- Develop a working knowledge of historically important directors
- Hone the ability to discuss directing from a historiographic approach

Expectations

As a graduate level course, there will be extensive readings assigned to help develop a synergy between theory and practice. Because this course operates by blending the two, much of the "learning" will come from discussion in class. In order to succeed, regular attendance, being prepared, and showing a positive willingness to engage, negotiate, and collaborate is a necessity! Discussion based learning will only work if you are prepared and willing to engage.

Required Purchases/Materials

The Cambridge Introduction to Directing by Christopher Innes and Maria Shevtsova

Experimental Theatre: From Stanislavsky to Peter Brook by James Roose-Evans

The Empty Stage by Peter Brook

Theatre & Interculturalism by Ric Knowles

Theatre & Dance by Kate Elswitt

Theatre & The Digital by Bill Blake

Theatre & Globalization by Dan Rebellato

Additional Readings on TRACS

Attendance Policy

This class only meets once a week. As graduate students you are expected to attend every class session. You are allowed one absence with advance notice if necessary. Every absence beyond one without advanced permission will result in a drop in letter grade.

* As graduate students, I promote your participation in professional development opportunities. If you need to miss class for a conference, interview, or other career advancement meeting please discuss with me suitable ways of making up the time missed.

Course Assignments

Readings/Viewings

Students are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss any reading assignments or videos detailed on your syllabus or assigned during class. Readings will come from material on the course TRACS webpage and from required books.

Weekly Written Assignments

Students will write a two-page (500 word) weekly summary of your readings highlighting the historical/societal context of the directors and directorial approach. These notes are due 18 hours before the class in which we will discuss the readings. They should approach this assignment by answering the question: "Why did these directors or directing approaches emerge in this particular time and place?"

Production Conceptualizations

Each student will present two directing conceptualization projects applying the style of one of the directors/companies discussed in the class. They should use this as an opportunity to develop a proposal for a project they would like to direct in the future. Format and assignment guidelines will be posted on TRACS.

Final

Students will choose between a research paper or a take home written final. The paper will be 5-8 pages in length focusing on a director or an artistic company lead by a director not covered in class. The paper is due on the final. This paper should put the artist's approach into historical context and introduce a minimum of two of the artist's productions. The take home final will consist of five essay questions relative to material covered in class over the semester. The expectation would be for a response of roughly 5-8 pages of written material.

Production Research Presentations

Each student will lead 5 in-class discussions on a production chosen from the list of directors/companies. Productions will be chosen the first week of class. Because it is impossible to cover every important director/company, you may choose one production from an artist not listed on the syllabus with permission from the

instructor. Students should provide visual documentation of the production and present an argument or a series of questions regarding the production for discussion. Written material should not exceed 2 pages.

Assignments

Weekly Two-Page Summaries - 25%

Director's Concepts - 20%

Research Paper/Final - 15%

Research Presentations - 40%

Grade Scale

Final Grade	Assignment Grade	
93 - 100% A	A+ = 100%	C = 77%
83 - 92.9% B	A = 96%	C- = 73%
70 - 82.9% C	A- = 93%	D+ = 69%
60 - 69.9% D	B+ = 90%	D = 67%
Below 60% F	B = 87%	D- = 60%
	B- = 83%	F = 0 to 59%
	C+ = 80%	

It is against department and university policy to discuss grade electronically. If you wish to discuss your grades please set up a time to talk with the instructor during office hours.

Schedule

Date	Assignment/Reading Due	Theme
Week 1 M - Jan 28	Read Syllabus <i>Cambridge</i> p. 1-56 <i>20th Century</i> - Chapters 1-2 Readings on TRACS	Roots of the Modern Director: Antiquity to Naturalism Class Logistics and Syllabi

Date	Assignment/Reading Due	Theme
Week 2 M - Feb 4	<i>Cambridge</i> p. 56 - 77 <i>Experimental Theatre</i> - Chapters 2, 3, 7 <i>20th Century</i> Chapter 6 and pp. 113-127 Readings On TRACS	The New Art of Directing: Realism and The Independent Theatre Movement
Week 3 M - Feb 11	<i>Cambridge</i> p. 78-96 <i>Experimental Theatre</i> Chapters 4-6 <i>20th Century</i> Chapter 8 and pp. 130-136 Readings on TRACS	Revolutions in Form: AntiRealism and Theatricality In Russia Production: Meyerhold, Vakhtangov
Week 4 M - Feb 18	<i>Cambridge</i> Chapter 4 <i>Experimental Theatre</i> Chapter 9 <i>Twentieth Century</i> Chapter 10 Readings on TRACS	German Innovations Before WWII: Expressionism / Political Theatre Production: Piscator, Rheinhardt
M - Feb 25	No Class (KCACTF)	
Week 5 M - Mar 4	<i>Cambridge</i> Chapter 4 (Mueller Section) Boal - pp. 1 -50 and 80-115 Readings On TRACS	Brechtian and Post-Brechtian Politics Production: Brecht, Müller , Boal
Week 6 M- Mar 11	Readings TBD	Directing in American Musical Theatre Productions: Prince, Nunn, Robbins, Fosse
M - Mar 18	No Class (Spring Break)	
Week 7 M - Mar25	<i>20th Century</i> Chapters 13, 14 <i>Experimental Theatre</i> Chapter 10, 12, 15 Readings on TRACS	The 60's Cultural Revolutions Production: Schechner, Malina and Beck, Artaud, Kaprow, Stewart, Grotowski, Kantor, Chaikin

Date	Assignment/Reading Due	Theme
Week 8 M - Apr 1	Cambridge Chapter 5 <i>Experimental Theatre</i> Chapter 19 20th Century pp. 429-239 Brook - <i>The Empty Stage</i>	Auteur Directors and Postmodern Aesthetics Production: Brook, Wilson, Akalatis, Foreman, Sellars, Şerban
Week 9 M - Apr 8	<i>Experimental Theatre</i> 16, 17, 18 Knowles - <i>Theatre and Interculturalism</i> <i>Couple in the Cage</i> (Video) Readings on TRACS	Inter, Multi, Trans -cultural Conversations Production: Mnouchkin, Fornés, Barba, Valdez, Taymor, Lee, Fusco and Gómez-Peña
Week 10 M - Apr 15	<i>Experimental Theatre</i> 11, 14 <i>Pina</i> (Video) Elswitt - <i>Theatre and Dance</i> Readings on TRACS	Choreography as Directing Productions: Haprin, Bausche, Punchdrunk, Clarke
Week 11 M - Apr 22	Cambridge Chapters 6, 7, 8 Readings On TRACS	Ensemble Theatre Part 1: Devised and Collaborative Process Production: Bogart, McBurney, Rice, Breuer, Etchells, Collins, Graham
Week 12 M - Apr 29	Cambridge Chapters 6, 7, 8 Blake - <i>Theatre & the Digital</i> Readings on TRACS	Ensemble Theatre Part 1: Media Production: LeCompte, Weems, Mitchell, Blast Theory, Lepage, Rimini Protokoll, Anderson
Week 13 M - May 6	Rebellato - <i>Theatre & Globalization</i> Readings on TRACS	21st Century Innovators Production: Ivo Van Hove, Miranda, Ostermeier, Romeo Castellucci, Lauwers, Bellarus Free Theatre

This schedule is subject to change.

University/Course Policies

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND HONOR CODE

Academic dishonesty (which includes plagiarism, copying someone else's work, falsifying data, or unauthorized collaboration) is a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action. Don't do it. The Honor Code - <http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/Academic-Integrity.html>. Purposefully engaging in acts that go against the honor code policy can cause an immediate zero in the course.

CELLPHONE AND LAPTOP USAGE

Always be respectful of the abilities, opinions, focus and comfort of your fellow students. Please keep cell phones silenced all times while in the classroom. You may use them to take notes or to record material but if you are using the technology in a distracting manner you will be requested turn it off. I encourage the use of laptops or tablets but ask that you do so only to engage in activities directly related to what is happening in the class at the moment, such as taking notes.

POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Texas State forbids discrimination in any university activity or program. Faculty members, staff employees, and students who discriminate against others in connection with a university activity or program will be considered to have violated this policy and are subject to disciplinary sanctions. This policy is carried over to individuals in the class. Any discriminatory conduct expressed in the class will be subject to proper disciplinary actions as prescribed by University policy. Discrimination = conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects the individual or group to treatment that adversely affects their employment or education because of their race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, veterans' status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR A DISABILITY

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.

ACCOMMODATIONS BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

It is the responsibility of every instructor to clearly explain his or her procedures about absences due to religious observances in the course syllabus so that all students are fully informed, in writing, near the beginning of each semester's classes. Campus policy regarding religious observances states that faculty must make reasonable accommodation for them and in so doing, be careful not to inhibit or penalize those students who are exercising their rights to religious observance. Faculty should be aware that a given religious holiday may be observed with very different levels of attentiveness by different members of the same religious group and thus may require careful consideration to the particulars of each individual case.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of

race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a request for the offending student to leave class. 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. Useful Links:

Code of Student Conduct - <http://www.dos.txstate.edu/handbook/rules/cosc.html>