



THEA 3433: Principles of Directing

Fain College of Fine Arts

Fall 2026

MWF 11:00-11:50 AM

Contact Information

Instructor: Liz Redmill

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Office hours: Mon- Fri 1:00-3:00 PM or by appointment

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Course Description

Exploration of the fundamental techniques and aesthetics of directing. Practice in translating analysis into performance and production through the direction of short scenes. Consideration of the role of the director in play selection, production conception, design, casting, rehearsing, and staging.

This introductory course explores the theories and methods of directing theatre, with a strong emphasis on working with actors. Students will engage in hands-on exercises, workshops, readings, and discussions to develop foundational skills in directing. Key areas include text analysis, directing styles, collaboration with actors and designers, and the organization of a production. The course focuses on practical experience through scene work and concludes with the direction of a 10-minute play that showcases the student's artistic vision. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to confidently analyze, prepare, and direct a play.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Handouts and PDFs of reading materials will be provided through D2L.

Suggested Texts:

- [*Directing for the Stage*](#) by Terry John Converse
- [*Play Directing*](#) by Francis Hodge

Course Objectives

This course aims to equip students with a solid understanding of directing within a theatrical framework. Key objectives include:

- Analyzing texts and developing a unified production concept.
- Conducting effective rehearsals and supporting actors in character development.
- Honoring the playwright's intent while creating purposeful stage movement.

- Exploring various directing techniques for storytelling and collaboration.
- Gaining hands-on experience directing.
- Strengthening professionalism through commitment, collaboration, and reliability.

Course Requirements

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION:

- Turn off or silence cell phones. Cell phones should not be seen or heard during class time.
- Engage in daily activities and class discussions.
- NO gum, food, or drinks are allowed in the studio. A water bottle with a lid is welcome and encouraged. (Please no Stanley cups.)
- Listen and remain attentive during class. Have fun, be engaged, participate fully to develop your skills and imagination, and gain insight into yourself. Participation will be graded on attitude, effort, execution of concepts, improvement, and classroom discipline and conduct.
- Remain respectful and attentive while others are speaking/demonstrating in class.
- If you must leave the classroom before the end of class, please let the instructor know beforehand.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS:

- Students will complete three self-assessments during the semester to reflect on their personal growth in the directing skills being taught. Each assessment will focus on their progress, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- Self-assessments will be submitted on D2L.

SCRIPT ANALYSIS:

- Students will complete an in-depth script analysis on the 10-minute play of their choosing. This script analysis will be based on the style of Francis Hodge.
- Each individual section of the script analysis will be discussed at length during class.
- Students should expect to spend 3-4 hours a week on their script analysis.

DIRECTING EXERCISES:

- Each week will focus on a different element of basic staging principles for the beginning director.
- Students should expect to both direct and act in short (1-2 minute), devised scenes every week.
- Students will be given the requirements for each directing exercise on Monday and are expected to be ready to direct on Wednesday.

PRODUCTION REVIEW:

- Students are required to attend *Tower Stories*, *Ordinary Days*, and *The Crucible*. You can receive a free ticket with your valid MSU Student ID.
- Students will write a 2-page, double-spaced paper for the production reflecting on their observation of the performance. Details for this paper can be found on D2L.
- This paper should demonstrate thoughtful observation and connection between class content and live performance.
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FINAL EXAM:

- The final exam will be a presentation of fully staged 10-minute plays. Each director will select, cast, and rehearse a 10-minute play that will be performed for an invited audience.
- Students will be responsible for booking rehearsal spaces and holding rehearsals outside of class time.
- Specific details of the final presentation will be discussed at length during class.

Attendance

This is a studio course and carries the expectation that students should be active participants in their coursework. Participation is the only way to meet the objectives of this course. Attendance is **MANDATORY**. The content of each class builds on the content covered in the prior class. Students who are absent will be expected to proactively seek out and understand the information covered in class.

Three non-official absences are allowed to accommodate students who must miss class due to illness, family functions, etc. If a student is acting as an official representative of the University they must provide prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event. Please communicate with the instructor as soon as possible about illness or scheduled absences.

Tardiness is extremely disruptive and disrespectful to the creative process; please arrive on time, ready to engage in the activities. If a student is more than 25 minutes late for class without contacting the instructor in advance, it will be considered an absence. Students who disappear for more than 10 minutes during class will also be considered absent.

Late work will not be accepted. If a student is absent, homework must be turned in via email, D2L (when applicable), or a classmate the day it is due. Special arrangements will need to be made if a student misses a weekly directing exercise. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss potential options.

Instructor Class Policies

Please Note: Due to the nature of this course, you will be working closely with other students and the instructor. Some exercises and techniques require physical contact. If you are uncomfortable at any time with the activities, please inform the instructor immediately and all reasonable accommodations will be made.

AI STATEMENT

You may use AI for planning, idea development, and initial research. Your final submission should show how you developed and refined these initial ideas into the final submission.

SAFE ZONE STATEMENT

The instructor considers this classroom (or whatever space in which this class is meeting) to be a place where everyone will be treated with respect as a human being –regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided all can agree to disagree. It is the instructor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom/meeting location a safe environment.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER RECORDING DEVICES

The use of cell phones and other recording or electronic devices is strictly prohibited during class. The instructor may record performances, from time to time, on a cell phone for legitimate class reasons. Student recording of the class is prohibited, unless it is part of a reasonable accommodation under ADA, unless it is done by the instructor for grading purposes, or can be done by obtaining written consent by the instructor. If you are uncomfortable having your performances recorded, please let the instructor know.

SCHOOL CLOSURES/INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of a school closure due to inclement weather or other situations, classes will be moved to Zoom through D2L. Make sure to check D2L announcements for specific instructions.

Grading

Assignments	Percentage
Weekly Directing Exercises	30%
Self-Assessments	10%
Script Analysis	25%
Production Reviews	10%
Final Exam (10-min scene)	25%
Total Percentage	100%

Grade	Percentage
A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-66.99
D-	60-62.00
F	Below 60

Important Theatre Department Dates

8/26 (4:00 pm)	Majors/Minors Meeting
9/2 (4:00 pm)	Majors/Minors Meeting
9/10-9/12 (7:30 pm)	<i>Tower Stories</i>
9/13 (10:00 am)	<i>The Crucible</i> auditions
9/23	High School Honors Day
9/24-9/27 (7:30 pm/2:30 pm Sunday)	<i>Ordinary Days</i>
10/14 (4:00 pm)	Majors/Minors Meeting
11/12-11/15 (7:30 pm/2:30 pm Sunday)	<i>The Crucible</i>
11/18(4:00 pm)	Majors/Minors Meeting
11/23-11/24	Spring Show Auditions
12/4 (2:00-5:00 pm)	Juries

Course Schedule

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1	-Introduction to course and syllabus -Reading "Embarrassment" from <i>A Director Prepares</i> by Anne Bogart -What is a director? Self-Assessment #1 Due	8/26 8/28
Week 2	-Introduce 10-Minute Play Final -Begin Silent Tension Exercise -Silent Tension Scenes	8/31 9/2
Week 3	-No Class-Labor Day -Serial Starters	9/7 9/9
Week 4	10-minute Play Selection DUE -Script Analysis: Given Circumstances -Serial Starters	9/14 9/16
Week 5	-Finish Serial Starters -No Class-Honors Day -Intro Pick Six	9/21 9/23 9/25
Week 6	-Script Analysis: Dialogue -Pick 6	9/28 9/30
Week 7	Given Circumstances DUE -Pick 6	10/5
Week 8	-Script Analysis: Dramatic Action -Directing Exercise TBD	10/12 10/14
Week 9	Dialogue DUE - Directing Exercise TBD	10/19 10/21
Week 10	-Script Analysis: Characters -Discuss Auditions -Discuss Creating Rehearsal Schedules	10/26 10/28 10/30
Week 11	10-Minute Play Auditions Dramatic Action DUE -Finalize Cast Lists -Script Analysis: Idea, Mood, Tone -Writing a Concept Paper -Intro Groundplans with Open Scenes	11/1 11/2 11/2 11/4 11/6
Week 12	-Groundplans with Open Scenes	11/9
Week 13	Characters DUE -Finish Groundplans with Open Scenes -Work on Script Analysis -No Class-Liz at Thespians Conf.	11/16 11/16 11/18 11/20
Week 14	Idea, Mood, Tone DUE -Rehearsal Time Thanksgiving Break	11/23 11/23 11/25-11/27

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 15	-Rehearsal Time -Rehearsal Time -Reading: "Resistance" from <i>A Director Prepares</i> by Anne Bogart	11/30 12/2 12/4
Finals Week	Final, revised script analysis will be due at the 10-minute play showing Ten-Minute Plays Performance	12/8 12/8

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Participation in laboratory classes (acting, voice, movement) often requires students to wear yoga, movement, or period style clothes/costumes. These types of garments may be thin or form fitting which may make concealed carry of a firearm difficult if not impossible. In addition, students are often required to make physical contact with other students while learning exercises, choreography and/or physical positioning within special technique work. This required physical contact may also make concealment of a firearm difficult. While concealed carry is not prohibited in laboratory style class, students are reminded that intentional display of a firearm may result in criminal and/or civil penalties and unintentional display of a firearm is a violation of university policies and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion from the program and university. Students should factor the above in their decision as to whether or not to conceal carry in any theatre laboratory class.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.