



Course Syllabus: Principles of Directing

College of Fine Arts

THEA 3433-101

Fall 2024; MWF 12:00pm-12:50pm

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Grace Edgar

Office: 105

Office hours: MWF 11am-12pm, T 1-3pm and by appointment

Office phone: (940)397-4908

E-mail: grace.edgar@msutexas.edu

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.

Directing students will read plays, select scenes, perform script analysis and research, recruit actors, cast and rehearse scenes. This work will cumulate in three invited scenes performances. Basic principles of Intimacy Choreography will be covered and directors will be expected to create brave spaces for their actors. Devising techniques will be introduced and a short devised piece will be composed.

Course Objectives

- Read plays analytically and expand knowledge of the canon.
- Understand the role of the director in a production process.
- Through extensive research and imagination, create the “world of the play.”
- Communicate effectively, efficiently and kindly with actors and/or designers.
- Learn and apply the basic principles of Intimacy Choreography.
- Introduce methods for beginning to devise theatrical work.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- *Sense of Direction: Some Observations on the Art of Directing* by William Ball
- Additional handouts or PDFs shared by Dr. Edgar through D2L
- Plays from which the scenes are selected
- Three-ring binder

Student Handbook

Refer to: MSU Student Handbook 2023-2024

https://msutexas.edu/student-life/_assets/files/handbook.pdf

Conduct Statement

Behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and receive a final lower grade, up to an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

The university policy and procedures for academic dishonesty are outlined in the current Student Handbook in Appendix E. No cheating, collusion, or plagiarism will be tolerated in this class. Any student engaging in an academic dishonesty act will be sanctioned appropriately.

AI Policy

The MSU Student Handbook covers Academic Honesty under University Policies and Procedures. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

- Cheating is (1) the use of any unauthorized assistance, (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the Instructor, or (3) acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material.
- Plagiarism is the use of another person's published or unpublished work without full and clear acknowledgment.
- Collusion is collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit if the faculty member in charge does not authorize that collaboration.

Use of AI to assist in the completion of assignment will not be allowed or tolerated in this course.

Student Privacy Statement

Federal law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss a student's academic progress or other matters with his/her parents without the proper release from students.

Title IX Statement

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick
Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit
<https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

Pregnant and Parenting Students

To support the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions, the University offers reasonable modifications based on the student's particular needs. Any student who is pregnant or parenting a child up to age 18 or has conditions related to pregnancy, may contact MSU's designated Pregnancy and Parenting Liaison to discuss support available through the University. The Liaison can be reached by emailing ruby.garrett@msutexas.edu or calling 940-397-4500. Should a student communicate with me that they are pregnant or have a pregnancy related condition or may need additional resources related to pregnancy or parenting, I will

communicate that student's information to the Title IX Coordinator, who will work with the student and others, as needed, to ensure equal access to the University's education program or activity.

A pregnant student, a parenting student, or a student with pregnancy related conditions may be provided with supportive measures, based on the student's individualized needs, analogous to those provided to a student with a temporary medical condition, and provided such supportive measures do not fundamentally alter the nature of an education program or activity. Such supportive measures may include, but are not limited to:

For pregnant students:

(1) Providing breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom;

(2) Excusing intermittent absences to attend medical appointments;

(3) Providing access to online or homebound education, including the providing of access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures (to the extent such materials, recordings are made available to any student with an excused absence);

(4) Facilitating changes in schedule or course sequence, including extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations and/or providing opportunity to make up missed assignments/assessments (such time extensions shall be applied in the same manner as the University grants and provides ADA/504 accommodations for additional time);

(5) Allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby;

(6) Offering counseling;

(7) Facilitating changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest);

(8) Allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals or unborn children;

(9) Providing elevator access;

(10) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission if the student remains in good academic standing; or

(11) Making other necessary changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

For Parenting Students:

(1) Facilitating priority registration to the extent the University provides early registration for any other group of students; or

(2) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission.

Grading

Grades will be comprised of the student director's preparation and direction of two scenes (15% each), a devised performance (15%), three reflective papers on the scenes (10% each), a midterm exam (10%), and a presentation (15%).

The student is allowed three absences per semester. Three late arrivals equal one absence. Any additional absences will result in a 10% reduction from the final grade.

90% or above=A, 80% or above =B, 70% or above=C, 60% or above=D and 59% or below=F.

Table 1: Percentages allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Percentage
Scene #1	15%
Reflective Paper #1	10%
Scene #2	15%
Reflective Paper #2	10%
Devised Performance	15%
Reflective Paper #3	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Anne Bogart Presentation	15%
Total Percentage	100%

Table 2: Total percentage for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	90% or above
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Less than 60%

Scene Preparation and Direction

Student directors will be expected to read plays, select scenes, and do extensive research on their scene. Research areas include but are not limited to the playwright, the time period when the play is set and the time period when the play was written, the style of the play, historical productions of the play, and ideas about technical elements including set, props, lights and costumes. Student directors will present their research to the class through a presentation.

There will be an invited performance of the scenes. Each student director will briefly introduce their scene to the audience. Each scene will be graded on the student director's preparation and the successful performance of the scene. There will be three scenes' performances and each will count as 15% of your final grade. One of the scenes performances will be a devised piece.

Reflective Papers

After the scenes' performance, the student director will write a self-evaluating reflective paper on the successful and less successful aspects of the rehearsal process and scene performance. This is an opportunity to reflect on one's work and make improvements in the next directing project. There will be three reflective papers and each will count as 10% of your final grade. Papers should be uploaded into [D2L](#).

Mid-Term Exam

There will be a midterm exam on October 18, 2024 during class time. You will receive a midterm review study guide on October 9, 2024 and we will have a midterm review session in class on October 16, 2024. The midterm will count as 10% of your final grade.

Anne Bogart Presentations

Each student will prepare a presentation from a chapter of Anne Bogart's *Director Prepares*. The topics will be assigned by Dr. Edgar. The presentation will count as 15% of your final grade.

Devised Performance

There will be a final devised performance on December 6, 2024 at 7PM. The devised performance will count as 15% of your final grade.

MSU Productions and Extra Credit

Attend the Midwestern plays this semester *Mr. Burns; a post-electric play* and *The Thanksgiving Play*. Your ticket is free to both of these shows with your validated Midwestern Student ID. Seating may be limited for these productions, please ensure you reserve your tickets early. An analysis bonus paper (additional 5% added to your final grade) discussing a successful

scene performance of your choice will be due one week after the production closes.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted with the exception of an emergency.

Make Up Work/Tests

No make-up work or tests will be accepted with the exception of an emergency.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: August 29, 2024

Deadline to file for December graduation: September 23, 2024

Deadline to file for May graduation: October 4, 2024

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 25, 2024

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

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.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by Dr. Edgar. The student is allowed three absences per semester. Three late arrivals will equal one absence. Any additional absences will result in a 10% reduction from the final grade.

Instructor Class Policies

Course Requirements

1. Participation: Daily participation in class activities and discussions.
2. Reading: This course requires a great deal of reading outside of class. Assigned reading is to be completed before the beginning of the week for the material covered during the week. Additionally, the student-director must read the entire plays which contain their directing scenes.
3. Rehearsals: Each student director will be responsible for booking spaces and having rehearsals outside of class times.

General Notes

Cell phones need to be turned off or to airplane mode during all classes. Dedicate class time to being present and learning your craft.

No gum or food. Please always bring water to drink.

Scenes can be chosen by you, but will need to be email to Dr. Edgar for approval. Content warnings will be given for strong language and/or mature material.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

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

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

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.

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of Dr. Edgar.

Course Schedule:

Week	Subject	Assigned Reading
Week 1 8/26-8/30	Intimacy Choreography Basics, How Directors Research, Begin reading plays for scene selection	Chapter 2 of <i>Staging Sex</i> and Chapter 3 of <i>Play Directing on D2L</i>
Week 2 9/4-9/6	"Auditions and Casting" "Relation to the Actor" Select scenes	From <i>A Sense of Direction</i> 37-69
Week 3 9/9-9/13	"Objectives" Begin research	70-92

Week	Subject	Assigned Reading
Week 4 9/16-9/20	"The Rehearsal Process" Presentations of research Cast scenes	93-149
Week 5 9/23-9/27	"Connotation" "An Epilogue" Begin rehearsals	150-177
Week 6 9/30-10/4	"Art, Consciousness, Belief, Unity" Continue rehearsals	3-12
Week 7 10/7-10/11	"Intuition, Creativity, Positation" Select Scene #2	
Week 8 10/14-10/18	Midterm review <i>Midterm</i> <i>Perform Scene #1</i>	13-22
Week 9 10/21-10/25	"The Cornerstones of Success" Begin research Cast Scene #2 Begin rehearsals	23-36
Week 10 10/28-11/1	"Story and anti-story" "Memory" Presentations of research Continue rehearsals	<i>From A Director Prepares</i> 7-42
Week 11 11/4-11/8	"Violence" "Eroticism" Continue rehearsals	43-78
Week 12 11/11-11/15	"Terror" "Stereotype" Begin research <i>Perform scene #2</i>	79-136
Week 13 11/18-11/22	Devising Exercises Cast Devising Performance	
Week 14 11/25	"Embarrassment" "Resistance" Continue rehearsals	137-155
Week 15 12/2-12/6	Continue rehearsals <i>Devised Performance</i>	
Week 16 12/11 3:30PM	<i>Reflection Paper #3</i>	

Important Dates

Assignment Due	Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Midterm Exam	October 18, 2024	10%
Scene Performance #1	October 19, 2024 at 2PM	15%
Scene Performance #2	November 16, 2024 at 7PM	15%
Devised Performance	December 6, 2024 at 7PM	15%
Final Reflective Paper	December 11, 2024 by 3:30PM	15%