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Fall 9-1-2022

THTR 677.01: Problems in Directing

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PROBLEMS IN DIRECTING

School of Theatre & Dance – University of Montana

THTR 677 / Fall 2022 / 3 credits

M 3.00-4.00, F 3:00–4:50 pm; McGill Hall 125 and in studio/rehearsal variously
W by appointment

<u>Professors</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>	<u>Office / Office Hrs</u>
Michael Legg Bernadette Sweeney	Michael.legg@mso.umt.edu Bernadette.sweeney@mso.umt.edu	PARTV Rep office/ tba McGill 216/ tba

COURSE AIM:

This course in problems in directing will combine upcoming project-based work with readings on directing and programming. We will be observing and analyzing some projects in development, which will require some time spent in studio. We will also be applying readings and concepts to a selection of 'problem' scripts, contemporary and classical, some of which you can propose. Thematically, we will be working with the following:

PRODUCTION AND PROGRAMMING

GRANT WRITING

REHEARSALS AND CASTING

DIRECTORIAL READING AND RESEARCH

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

DESIGN

Projects for observation/analysis/participation include:

- Montana Rep Plays on Tap: Buckle up
- School of Theatre and Dance fall season
- [Jeanette Rankin Musical development workshop](#)
- Montana Rep: Hearth, script in redevelopment and late fall production
- [CCI Co-Lab for civic imagination](#)
- Montana Rep: early development work on Educational outreach tour for 2023

COURSE OUTCOMES: By the end of the semester, you will demonstrate

- An ability to interpret, analyze, and conceptualize problematic scripts
- An appreciation of the heightened performance demands and staging/aesthetic possibilities of 'problem' plays which feature challenging staging elements
- A further understanding of performance project development
- An enhanced ability to approach programming, grant-writing and project proposal
- An ability to directorially re-envision or reinterpret a historical play through a contemporary staging lens
- A further understanding of the challenges of collaboration on designing 'problem' plays

REQUIRED TEXTS:

READINGS and SCRIPTS ON MOODLE We will provide articles on Moodle by directors, on directing, on programming, and also a selection of challenging scripts for our discussion.

ATTENDANCE: As a graduate level directing course there are no un-excused absences. Unexcused absences drop the final grade a third of a letter and so on. Two late arrivals equal one absence.

OVERALL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS / Criteria Grading Breakdown:

Grades will be determined by attendance; intellectual, creative and technical process work; engagement; preparedness; and progress. Graded components are as follows:

Attendance and participation: 500 points – 50% of course total

Problem play proposal and concept, due in finals week: 500 points – 50% of course total.

CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES & PROTOCOL

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php.

SCHOOL OF THEATRE & DANCE::

All Theatre & Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance Student Handbook. The Handbook is available online at <http://www.umt.edu/theatredance/about/handbook>.

Risk: There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop, or rehearsal with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in class/shop/rehearsal/performance do so at their own risk.

Class Etiquette: There is **no eating, drinking, or gum chewing** during studio classes. **Water in a capped container** is acceptable. Absolutely **no weapons**, real or fake, are allowed in the classroom. When class has ended, we must return studio to its original condition. **Guests:** Due to safety considerations, at no point during a student's time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student without the instructor's consent. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.

Office for disability equity

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with [ODE](#), please contact the ODE office. We will work with you and ODE to provide an appropriate course modification.

STUDENT WELLNESS:

The School of Theatre & Dance recognizes that theatre and performance content and processes can provoke; therefore, during the course of a class or rehearsal, students can choose to remove themselves from activities should they feel a threat to their well-being. Please communicate with your instructor and/or stage manager as soon as you can, prior to or after leaving.

Personal considerations such as health, wellness and/or other issues can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in the university setting. For helpful resources, please contact the Curry Health Center Counseling department at 406-243-4711 or schedule an online appointment through the health portal: www.umt.edu/hportal. For a crisis or for after-hours care, you can contact: the emergency rooms at St. Patrick Hospital or Community Medical Center; the National Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255; or the Crisis Text line: text MT to 741-741. For University of Montana financial aid: phone: (406) 243-5373 or email faid@mso.umt.edu. Please stay in communication with your faculty advisor and know that we are here to help. You can call in anytime to our office hours (posted on office doors) or email us to set up an appointment.

Course Grade % Scale :

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
A	94-100	4.0	C+	77-79	2.3
A-	90-93	3.7	C	73-76	2.0
B+	87-89	3.3	C-	70-72	1.7
B	83-86	3.0	D+	67-69	1.3
B-	80-82	2.7	D	60-66	1.0
			F	0-59	0.0

CLASS SCHEDULE: subject to change

THEMES:

PRODUCTION AND PROGRAMMING

GRANT WRITING

REHEARSALS AND CASTING

DIRECTORIAL READING AND RESEARCH

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

WORKING WITH DESIGN AND DESIGNERS

Week 1: Introduction, discussion on challenges of programming

Week 2: Attend rehearsals for Jeanette Rankin *We won't Sleep*. Discussion on what kind of director are you?

Week 3: Discussion on project direction with Michael Rohd of CCI

Week 4: On Design Reading and research. Problem Play: *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Reading: on moodle

Week 5: Reading and research. Problem Play *Wet Brain*/lother contemporary play. Reading: on moodle

Week 6: On Co-production – challenges and opportunities. Problem Play: *Our Town*. Reading: on moodle

Week 7: On Grant writing

Week 8: Reading and research. Problem Plays: *The Weir* and *The Seafarer*. Reading: on moodle

Week 9: Reading and research. Problem Play: *Copper Thunderbird*. Reading: on moodle

Week 10: Pitching a play/project/season. Final project proposals.

Week 11: Rep Work in Development: *Hearth*

Week 12: On Rehearsal

Week 13: Reading and research. Problem Play: *Macbeth*. Reading: on moodle

Week 14: Reading and research. Final project preparation.

Week 15: Proposals of own problem plays

Articles:

[Our upcoming theatrical season](#)

[Let actors act](#)

[We see you White American Theatre – original text and progress report](#)