

COURSE SPECIFICATION
DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	CASS
Programme:	Performance and Theatre Arts
FHEQ Level:	4
Course Title:	Beginning Directing
Course Code:	THR 4100
Course Leader:	Michael Barclay
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures:	10
Seminar / Tutorials:	15
Screenings:	5
Field-trips:	5
Performances/Rehearsals	10
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
Semester:	Fall/Spring
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

Introduces students to the principles of directing and visual interpretation for the stage. The fundamentals of stage focus are closely examined, along with the natural areas of visual strength in blocking/staging and communicating with actors. Communication techniques for audiences through stage pictures and composition are evaluated and the underlying principles of the relationships between actor and director and the relationships between characters are examined. The course is a practical one: students work on exercises and progress to practical directing sessions of short assigned scenes, then onto the final chosen scene to be presented to an audience.

Prerequisites: None

Aims and Objectives:

This course will introduce practical tools for the beginning director to apply to both text and rehearsal. Students will evaluate the basics of staging, looking at the rules of stage focus. Principles of attracting attention and the strength of physical positions will be evaluated using class members in physical examples. Communication skills in the rehearsal process will be examined and applied whilst working with their peers. Students will discover the role the director plays within the collaborative process of theatre, and explore the application of visual interpretation skills in a practical situation. The students will apply their conceptual and theoretical understanding directing short assigned scenes, and in the more fully realised staging of a two-hander scene for their final project.

Programme Outcomes:

4A (ii); 4A(iii); 4B(ii); 4B (iii); 4C(i); 4C(ii); 4D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the various tools of composition and principles of directing, and apply them to the process by which a written text becomes stage performance.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the theoretical principles underpinning stage composition, acquiring a broader knowledge of body language, understanding how various practical elements of these areas of study affect an observer's perception of a character and the relationship between them and other characters.
- Demonstrate an ability to identify the principles of character development and to demonstrate how each character's objectives dictate the actor's and director's choices, synthesising information to discern, or create, workable objectives for each character in the scene.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate with actors in an appropriate and accessible manner, relating his or her own role to specified, externally defined parameters, and demonstrating awareness of the obligation to others during the process.

- Demonstrate an ability to direct at least one scene for critical analysis and a scene for presentation as the final project, working with a degree of limited autonomy within defined guidelines and developing through complex and non-routine performance tasks.

Indicative Content:

- Composition in Directing
- Actor's Physicality
- Concept of *objectives* as practices by actors and applied by directors
- Exploring specific plays as case studies
- Major directors of Film and Stage.
- Interpretations of Shakespeare.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

Teaching Methodology:

This course is heavily biased towards the practical, although there will be a number of lecture components and key films. Students will be taught through a series of class exercises, demonstrations, explorations and group discussion. This will include working in a controlled manner with partners using feedback from the instructor to define and refine the physical and psychological actions. The journal will provide a reflective forum for examination of the student's growing understanding of the craft. A series of case studies of directors will be examined by viewing their films. These films often contain controversial subject matter and imagery and students are expected to display maturity and critical distance.

Bibliography:

See syllabus for complete reading list

IndicativeText(s):

Innes, Christopher and Maria Shetsova, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Mitchell, Katie, *The Director's Craft-A handbook for Theatre*. Routledge, Oxford, 2009

Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus

Change Log for this CSD:

Major or Minor Change?	Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Major	Rewrite of Programme Outcomes	LTPC 30/5/14	
Major	Rewrite of Learning Outcomes	LTPC 30/5/14	
Minor	Updating of Indicative Texts	LTPC 30/5/14	