



# **DIRECTING: *Making the Event!***

St. Catherine University

THR 2150 / Fall 2015 / 4 credits

T/TH 1:30 – 3:10 pm, Music Building 106 / Frey Theater

<u>Professor</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>	<u>Office/Office Hrs</u>
Dr. Pamyla Stiehl	Email: <a href="mailto:pastiehl@stkate.edu">pastiehl@stkate.edu</a> 651-690-6681	Music Building 206 T / R 3:30-5:00 by appointment

## **COURSE OVERVIEW:**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Are you able to visualize the big picture, work in a team, and bring a concept to life on stage? This class provides an introduction to the theories and craft of theatre direction, i.e., the process and elements entailed in creating and spearheading a performative, theatrical event. Areas of study include textual analysis; audience analysis; concept development; rehearsal techniques; identification of event objectives, budget, venue, scheduling; and marketing design/promotion. Students will develop a working knowledge of the range of interpretive choices and production decisions made by the theatre director in translating a script or concept from page to stage.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to

- Analyze scripts in order to develop directorial concepts;
- Evaluate texts for theatrical requirements and aesthetic qualities;
- Develop a methodology for the realization of a staged production from initial concept discussions through performance, including charrettes, auditions, casting, rehearsals, scheduling, budget, and marketing;
- Create promptbooks, directorial scores, ground plans, and other tools for script analysis and rehearsal process documentation;
- Identify the means for realizing impactful stage composition/picturization, movement, and space utilization;
- Collaborate effectively with actors and other production team members;
- Evaluate and analyze live theatre events by attending productions in the Twin Cities, then communicating, through discussion and writing, reactions to the productions.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*Notes on Directing* by Frank Hauser and Russell Reich (available for purchase in bookstore)

*Crimes of the Heart* by Beth Henley (available for purchase in bookstore)

*Our Town* by Thornton Wilder (electronic text provided on D2L or any standard edition)

*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare (electronic text provided on D2L or any standard edition)

*The Red Coat* by John Patrick Shanley (hardcopy text will be provided)

*Trifles* by Susan Glaspell (hardcopy text will be provided)

**NOTE:** Supplemental handouts will be provided throughout the course. In order to successfully complete assignments, you will need to read and retain all supplemental materials, treating them as additional "textbook" resources. Additionally, all PowerPoint material delivered in class will be available on D2L under "Content."

### **TICKET PURCHASES:**

You are required to attend **THREE** live theatre productions. Please check dates and times (**evening times vary between theatres**). Theatre websites give travel directions, inc. public transportation options. The required productions are as follows:

1) **33 Variations** by Moisés Kaufman at PARK SQUARE THEATRE (Proscenium Stage), running Oct 10 to Nov 2; Thurs – Sat evenings at 7:30 (plus one Weds evening); Sun 2:00 matinees (including some Tues student matinees). Tickets range \$19 (for age 30 and under) to \$58 (premium seats) with **one Tuesday evening, Oct 14, performance for \$99 (first-come/first-served basis)** – reserve tickets by phone 651-291-7005 or online at [www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org). There is a box office link on D2L under "Theatre Links" module – please refer to site for all crucial box office info!

2) ***The Cover of Life*** by R.T. Robinson at St. Kate's Frey Theater, **running Nov 5 to Nov 9**; Thurs – Sat evenings at 7:00; Sun 2:00 matinee. **Tickets free with student ID.** Reserve tickets by calling O'Shaughnessy Ticket Office **651-690-6700**.

3) ***Witness for the Prosecution*** by Agatha Christie at THEATRE IN THE ROUND, **running Nov 14 to Dec 7**; Fri/Sat evenings at 8:00; Sun 2:00 matinee. **Student discounts (\$15.00 with ID) available for Fri and Sun performances only** – reserve tickets by phone **612-333-3010** or online at [www.theatreintheround.org](http://www.theatreintheround.org). *There is a box office link on D2L under "Theatre Links" module – please refer to site for all crucial box office info!*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken every day and is 10 percent of your grade (1 point per class / 30 pts total). Absences can only be excused if **formal documentation** is provided (e.g., doctor's note, court notice, obituary with travel itinerary) or if I am notified as to a religious observance conflict. In addition, if a pattern of **tardiness** becomes apparent, I may dock your attendance grade accordingly, with one warning. You are also expected to participate. If **lack of participation** becomes apparent, I may also dock your attendance grade accordingly (you are not fully "present" if not participating). Remember that participation also means **good citizenry** – respect and support your fellow classmates, keep feedback constructive, and share the floor during discussions/exercises.

### 2. THREE (3) TWIN CITY PRODUCTION WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. ***33 Variations* – Peer Review / Directing Critique Writing Workshop.** Bring to class your **ticket stub or other proof of attendance** attached to 1) **An opening paragraph in final, typed form**, as if you were writing your Directing Critique on *33 Variations* (see "*Directing Critique Prompt*" on D2L) and 2) **three bulleted examples** from the production that support your thesis, using complete sentences to present examples. (10 PT. GRADE SCALE) **Due Tuesday, Nov. 4**

2. ***Cover of Life* – Directing Critique (at least 2-3 pages).** Paper must reference entire production to earn total points. **You must attach your ticket** to your paper. \*\*See "*Directing Critique Prompt*" on D2L for paper specifications and grading rubric. (20 PT. GRADE SCALE) **Due Tuesday, Nov. 11.**

3. ***Witness for the Prosecution* – Directing Critique (at least 2-3 pages).** Paper must reference entire production to earn total points. **You must attach your ticket** to your paper. \*\*See "*Directing Critique Prompt*" on D2L for paper specifications and grading rubric. (20 PT. GRADE SCALE) **Due Tuesday, Dec. 9.**

**NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**NOTE:** All papers must be typed in 11- or 12-pt. font with one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled together; papers must be turned in immediately before or after class. Title page and extra spacing will not be counted toward page-length requirement.

*If you struggle with writing, I encourage you to make use of the Writing/Reading Center as you compose your papers. Tutors in the center can help you identify opportunities for improvement in your writing as well as assist you in clarifying your ideas and unique perspective on the subject. The Writing/Reading Center is located in the O'Neill Center for Academic Development in the lower level of the CDC.*

### 3. FOUR (4) PLAY CHARRETTES

The "charrette" system will be discussed and explained in class. It is a collaborative process in which directors conceptualize their productions through image and word with their design teams, often using a joint collage to initially inspire and develop the look, feel, and direction of a production. (Charrettes are also used in a variety of other industries to jointly conceptualize projects and solve design problems.) Four assigned plays will have charrette assignments attached. The project will serve as proof that you have read the play and are ready to discuss and conceptualize it as a "director," working with a production team. After each assigned director explains his/her vision of the play (based on directorial play analysis), all group members will contribute to and help develop a collage based on the director's vision and interpretation of the play. See "*Directing Charrette Prompt*" on D2L for detailed assignment specs and grading criteria.

EACH CHARRETTE = 10 POINTS; TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 40

#### 4. TWO (2) SCHEDULED QUIZZES OVER TEXTBOOK

There will be **2 general quizzes** over *Notes on Directing*. EACH QUIZ = 10 PTS; TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 20

➡ **No make-up quizzes!**

#### 5. BUDGET -- *Macbeth*

You will be asked to submit a budget breakdown for **your own directorial concept of a St. Kate's production of *Macbeth* at the Frey Theater**. You will be allotted a **\$10,000 budget** and assume you have St. Kate's technical support and general scenic/lighting supplies in stock. There are also no play royalties (Shakespeare) or theater rental (Frey). On a spreadsheet, you will need to break down the total budget into **projected dollar figures** for costumes, sets, props, marketing/promo, salaries (if hiring additional people such as paid actor/s or musicians), and any other additional items/support. The spreadsheet dollar amounts can be rough estimates, but in order to complete this exercise, you will also need to include a **brief summary/description of your directorial concept, as well as a props list, furniture list, costume breakdown, any unique set pieces, any rental equipment needed for desired special lighting/scenic effects, marketing costs, and any other specialty items** that will need to be purchased specifically for your staged interpretation of the play. The lists do not need dollar amounts, but they will help illuminate the rationale behind the overall categorized budget figures on the spreadsheet. There will be class time devoted to this assignment. POINTS POSSIBLE = 20

#### 6. AUDITION EXERCISE – *Crimes of the Heart*

We will spend two class periods on auditions and casting. Everyone will assume the role of director as we simulate an audition and casting process for *Crimes of the Heart*. Some of you (especially if you have had actor training) will also be asked to assume the role of auditioning actors (thus, you will wear two hats in this exercise). PARTICIPATION POINTS = 10

#### 7. REHEARSAL SCHEDULE – *Trifles*

You will need to submit a rehearsal schedule for a production of *Trifles*. Assume a **6-week production lead time**, from first rehearsal to opening night, with only **evenings/weekends available**. Your schedule should have the play divided into logical rehearsal segments with character/actor calls for each rehearsal. Remember to include any special/additional calls (e.g., off-book date, designer run-through, photo call, costume parade, tech / dress rehearsals, etc.). TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 20

#### 8. POSTER DESIGN – *Our Town*

Imagine you are leading the **poster design** efforts for YOUR production of *Our Town*. You will need to draft a mock-up on an **8x11 piece of paper, in color**, with a logo/"look" that you envision for your production, as well as incorporate production details (title, author, place, date, time, pricing, theatre company). The draft should reflect what you want your production to "say" to an audience (i.e., your production concept). We will share these with one another. POINTS POSSIBLE = 20

#### 9. MIDTERM: DIRECTOR'S SCORE and BACKGROUND RESEARCH -- *Trifles*

The midterm project is a two-part assignment that addresses *Trifles*:

##### **PART I: DIRECTOR'S SCORE:**

- 1) You must **state your idea/total meaning** for the play – BOTH the storytelling idea (*This is a play about . . .*) AND the thematic idea (message, moral, argument – what you want play to say to an audience).
  - 2) You must divide **entire play into units/beats, notated in script**.
  - 3) The **notes per unit** should include a **unit title, principal character/s' objective** (active want), other useful directorial notes that occur to you such as **mood, tempo, relevant given circumstances, and general blocking ideas**.
  - 4) At least **3 units need to be further broken down into tactics** per character (e.g. *A begs, B cries, A rants, B quiets, etc.*)
  - 5) **Optional:** Add other notes, e.g., "nasty/nice," discovery, suspense/violence, sex/love moments and relationship shifts.
- All notes can be informally marked in play margins next to unit/beat demarcations (even cryptic one-word notes can work) or notated on accompanying pages. The notes should provide a general roadmap as you prepare to rehearse the play.

**PART II: BACKGROUND RESEARCH SUMMARY:** You also need to do some **background research for the play** that would inform your directorial process, resulting in at least **2-3 pages of typewritten summary**. Pertinent background research would include information about the playwright, original production of the play (and subsequent developments/performances), life in rural America at the time of the play (including gender roles), and topics specifically addressed in the play (e.g., quilting). This is not a formal paper – you just need to show your research and its directorial impact. SCORE = 20 POINTS; BACKGROUND = 20 POINTS; TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 40

## 10. FINAL: DIRECTED SCENE with PROMPTBOOK / GROUND PLAN and DIRECTOR'S JOURNAL

The final for the class is your own directed two-person scene, along with two accompanying textual elements:

- 1) PERFORMED SCENE: **Using any play that we have read this semester, you will direct a 2-person scene of choice, 8-10 minutes long** (however, I would not suggest Shakespeare unless both you and your actors are versed in this style). Students in the class can also be actors in a scene for a fellow director (please limit your "actor" participation, however, as your main focus needs to be directing). You may choose to cast outside actors in your scene (I can help recruit from our department). There will be class time devoted to rehearsal in the Frey, with individual rehearsal periods observed by fellow classmates, and the scenes will ultimately be performed before an invited audience during our final exam period. Due to limited class time shared by all of you, every director will also need to work outside of class with his/her actors. The final scene is graded on the director's process, effort, and application of learned techniques (the acting component is not graded).
- 2) PROMPTBOOK and GROUND PLAN: For the performed scene, you will turn in its promptbook and ground plan, with blocking, units/beats, and some pertinent scoring descriptors noted (each principal's scene objective, give-and-take tactics, mood, tempo and any relevant given circumstances, as well as any findings as to "victories/violence," "nasty/nice," "love/sex," relationship dynamics, etc. (scene heighteners).
- 3) DIRECTOR'S JOURNAL: You will also be asked to journal your directorial process and rehearsals for this exercise, turning in the journal after the scene's performance. This is a personal account and reflection which needs detail and introspection, as well as chronicling your preparation and rehearsal process (victories and challenges). You are graded on the effort and detail of this journal (*hint: a "thorough" journal is longer than 2 pages . . .*).

PERFORMED SCENE = 20 POINTS; PROMPTBOOK/GROUND PLAN = 20 POINTS; JOURNAL = 10 POINTS  
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 50

### Grading Breakdown:

Attendance	30 pts
In-Class Directing Critique Workshop / Peer Review	10 pts
Two (2) Directing Critiques (20 pt grade scale each)	40 pts
Four (4) Charrettes (10 pt grade scale each)	40 pts
Two (2) Textbook Quizzes (10 pt grade scale each)	20 pts
Budget Project – <i>Macbeth</i> (20 pt grade scale)	20 pts
Audition Exercise – <i>Crimes of the Heart</i> (10 pt grade scale)	10 pts
Rehearsal Schedule – <i>Trifles</i> (20 pt grade scale)	20 pts
Poster Design – <i>Our Town</i> (20 pt grade scale)	20 pts
Midterm Director's Score + Background – <i>Trifles</i> (20 pt grade scale each)	40 pts
Final Scene + Promptbook/Ground Plan + Journal (20 / 20 / 10 pts)	50 pts

**Total Course Points Possible = 300 pts**

## OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES

### ACCOMODATIONS:

*St. Catherine University is committed to equal access for all and recognizes that disability is an aspect of diversity. The University's goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to the learning environment, accurate assessment of your achievement, please contact me and the Resources for Disabilities office as soon as possible. Access Consultants can be reached in the O'Neill Center at 651.690.6563 to discuss academic adjustments or accommodations.*

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

*St. Catherine University's mission provides for excellence in education through the search for truth and justice. According to the provisions of this mission, the University expects all students and faculty to uphold the highest standards of academic*

integrity. Any act of academic dishonesty threatens the value of all scholastic endeavors. The complete document on academic integrity, including the process for implementation, may be found in the LeGuide, the student guide to policies, procedure and rules at St. Catherine University. Individuals who plagiarize will immediately fail the assignment. Plagiarism may also result in failure of the class or expulsion from the University.

### **LECTURE GADGET "BAN":**

In order to ensure full class participation and to help minimize distractions, I've instated a "ban" on laptop computer use during lectures. It is crucial to the success of the course that you stay engaged during class, not clicking on a keyboard or buried in a laptop (or surfing the web or checking email . . .). Please check with me if you feel you need an exception to this rule. Rest assured, **my PowerPoint slides are posted on D2L and can be used as reference resources, along with other handouts**. Further, you may use your laptops for all in-class assignments or project work, so bring them to class. On a similar note, it goes without saying that cell-phone use, texting, etc., is also taboo, and all such gadgets are to be left in backpacks, out of sight, for the duration of the class (you can use the mid-class break to "plug back in").

### **Course Grade % Scale :**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>		<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
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:**

Remember to **check D2L** throughout the week for new and/or updated announcements and information. I will also be emailing you regularly with updates, reminders, and general information. Feel free to email me regularly as well with questions, concerns, or to simply touch base and/or further discuss a topic. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours.

Reading assignments are due by the start of class on the date by which they are listed. Please **BRING PLAYS TO CLASS** when we are working on or with them.

I have a "NO LATE ASSIGNMENT" policy – no exceptions . . . . I also have a "NO MAKE UP" and "NO ADDITIONAL / EXCEPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS" policy. The syllabus, required assignments, and grading rubric/s are set in stone. After-the-fact requests for extra credit, alternate/additional assignments or grading reconsiderations will not receive a response, as you have been duly informed that your grade is solely determined by the assignments and criteria set forth in this syllabus.

R 9/4 Course Intro and Orientation / Directing Overview

T 9/9 Reading the Play: Given Circumstances, Dialogue, Dramatic Action/Units; Character

- **Have read "Objectives" handout (William Ball)**

R 9/11 Reading the Play, cont.: Character; Idea; Mood and Tempo  
The Charrette System

T 9/16 Collaborating with Designers

- **Have read *The Red Coat*, be prepared with your directorial analysis/concept for charrettes**



R 9/18 Collaborating with Designers cont.

- ***The Red Coat* Charrette**
- **Have read *Trifles*, be prepared with your directorial analysis/concept for charrettes**

T 9/23 Other Partners and Teammates – producers, stage managers, assistants, dramaturgs

- ***Trifles* Charrette**
- **Have read *Crimes of the Heart*; be prepared with your directorial analysis/concept for charrettes**

R 9/25 Theater Spaces – working with a venue

- ***Crimes of the Heart* Charrette**
- **Have read *Our Town*; be prepared with your directorial analysis/concept for charrettes**

T 9/30 Auditions and Casting

- ***Our Town* Charrette**
- **Have read "Auditions and Casting" handout (Ball)**
- **DUE Audition Exercise -- General (bring *Crimes of the Heart* script to class)**

R 10/2 Auditions and Casting cont..

- **Have read *Macbeth***
- **DUE Audition Exercise -- Callbacks (bring *Crimes of the Heart* script to class)**

**33 Variations opens 10/10 at Park Square Theatre (11/2 is last chance to see – reserve your tickets early!)**

T 10/7 Rehearsal Prep and Beginnings – Scheduling, Read-Through, Table Work (bring *The Red Coat* and *Trifles* to class)

- **Have read "First Reading – Sitting Rehearsal" handout (Ball)**

R 10/9 Rehearsals – Stage Composition and Picturization (bring *Our Town* to class)

- **Have read "Composition" handout (Frances Hodge)**
- **Have read "Composition and Picturization" handout (Ball)**

T 10/14 Rehearsals – Working with Actors / Blocking (bring *Crimes of the Heart* to class)

- **DUE Rehearsal Schedule for *Trifles***
- **Have read "Blocking" and "Improvisation" handout (Ball)**

R 10/16 Rehearsals – Working with Actors / Shaping and Pacing (bring *Crimes of the Heart* to class)

- **DUE Midterm Director's Score and Background -- *Trifles***
- **Have read "Aphorisms on Comedy" handout (Ball)**

T 10/21 **QUIZ 1 – Notes on Directing ("Preface" through "VII: Talking to Actors")**

Rehearsals – Working with Actors / Miscellaneous Strategies and Techniques

R 10/23 Marketing and Print Pieces (bring *Our Town* to class)

- **DUE Final Scene chosen and approved, with actor ideas in mind**

T 10/28 **QUIZ 2 – Notes on Directing ("VIII: Getting a Laugh" through "Appendix V: Recommended Reading")**

The Director and Tech Week

*Notes on Directing* – Best Practices Discussion

- **Have read "Technical Rehearsal (Barrel-On-Thru) through Dress Rehearsal" handout (Ball)**

**The Cover of Life opens 11/5 at St. Kate's Frey Theater (11/9 is last chance to see – reserve your tickets early!)**

R 10/30 Other Types/Styles of Theater – physical theatre, musical theatre, Grotowski, Brechtian  
Poster Design Sharing/Roundtable

- **DUE Poster Design and Director's Notes – *Our Town***

T 11/4 33 *Variations* Discussion  
Other Types/Styles of Theater cont.

- **DUE In-Class Peer Review / Directing Critique Writing Workshop – 33 *Variations***

R 11/6 Opening and Production Maintenance  
Production Budgeting

- **Have read "The Promptbook" handout (Hodge)**

***Witness for the Prosecution* opens 11/14 at Theatre/Round (12/7 is last chance to see – reserve your tickets early!)**

T 11/11 Nontraditional Casting  
*The Cover of Life* discussion

- **DUE Directing Critique – *The Cover of Life***

R 11/13 In-class production budget work

T 11/18 Scene Rehearsals – Frey Theater

- **DUE Production Budget -- *Macbeth***

R 11/20 Scene Rehearsals – Frey Theater

T 11/25 Scene Rehearsals – Frey Theater

----- **THANKSGIVING BREAK – 11/27-11/30** -----

T 12/2 Scene Rehearsals – Frey Theater

R 12/4 Scene Rehearsals – Frey Theater

T 12/9 *Witness for the Prosecution* – Discussion  
Rehearsal Update/Review

- **DUE Directing Critique – *Witness for the Prosecution***

R 12/11 Final Scene Rehearsals – Frey Theater

**FINAL EXAM -- TUESDAY, December 16; 1:30-3:30, Frey Theater  
SCENE PRESENTATIONS with textual elements due**