Course Overview
This course is an introduction to the basic principles of directing, with primary foci on director-actor communication, composition, and script analysis. Emphasis is placed on practical work in the directing studio, and a variety of outside projects that focus and hone the beginning director’s process. The course culminates in a final project consisting of a ten minute one-act play for public performance.

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Course Objectives
★ An understanding of the history and function of the director.
★ Familiarity with the basic tools of the director.
★ Increased awareness of the collaborative process.
★ Mastery of a variety of means of script analysis.
★ Awareness of the aesthetic aims and responsibilities of the director.
★ Awareness of one’s own authoritarian biases and tendencies.

Assignments: Paper Projects
Readings
Readings for this class come from John Ahart’s *The Director’s Eye* and selected outside texts.

Rehearsal Observation
You will attend a working rehearsal of *Smash* and observe Susan in rehearsal. **You must attend a “working” rehearsal. Run-throughs or table work sessions are not acceptable.** The observation is a two page paper that explores and engages ideas or questions raised by watching another director rehearse. Take careful notes as to director-actor communication, text interpretation, clarity, rehearsal strategy, use of time, or anything else you find interesting. You must obtain permission to visit rehearsal by contacting the stage manager of the production. Plan ahead, and be respectful of the production process!

Unit Breakdown
A copy of your 10 minute script, divided and labeled into rehearsal units. Guidelines and expectations will be covered in class.

Groundplan
A visual representation of the scenic arrangement you will use in your 10 minute play. Guidelines and expectations will be covered in class.

Play Analysis
A full analysis of the ten minute play you will direct for the final. Guidelines and expectations will be covered in class.
Concept Presentation
You will have 30 minutes of class time to do a concept presentation. The first 10 minutes should be devoted to a “dream” concept presentation complete with text, images and sounds. You are to prepare and present your concept as though you were producing the play in the WU season with full support, in the Pelton Theatre. The last 10 minutes of your presentation should be focused on how you plan to realize your concept given the actual constraints of the D1 showcase. Please leave 10 minutes for discussion. You must rehearse and time your presentation to make sure you stay within the time constraints. You will be cut off if you run over time. Your classmates will roleplay your production team.

Rehearsal Schedule/Process Report
A rehearsal schedule for your ten minute play, including 3 or 4 rehearsals available for me to observe your process. We also have a class Google calendar; you are expected to keep an updated rehearsal schedule there. The process report should include a brief summary of your early rehearsals, and should be an exploration of key issues, highlighting areas of success, areas of perceived difficulty, and questions for the future.

Journal
A catch-all of ideas, questions, problems and frustrations that is focused on your work as a director in class and rehearsal. It may be organized in any fashion you wish. An excellent journal will contain text, images, sounds/media examples, etc.—think of it as a portable muse and confidante. It will be turned in to me at the end of the term; you may mark confidential passages with paperclips and I will not read them. The journal is due at the end of the term.

Work Book
At the end of the process, you will turn in your complete ten minute play working script, complete with analysis, unit breakdown, notes, etc. More specific guidelines will be given in class.

Summary
A two to three page (non-academic) summary of your experience with the final project. This should give a selective, detailed account of each stage of your process, and should be developed from notes you have taken along the way. If you’ve kept up on the journal, this should be very, very simple.

Assignments: Practical Application Projects
Open Scenes
Much of the work done in the first month of class involves you directing your peers in open scenes and workshopping these in class. We will do as many as we have time for; rehearsal time for these exercises is not to exceed three hours per scene. Each student will also direct an assigned open scene by Harold Pinter or David Mamet in a found space in this building. These assignments focus on text, imagination, and basic movement.

TBA Play Scene
This assignment allows you to work with a brief section (no longer than five minutes) of a contemporary play, which we will choose as a class. This assignment focuses on practical problems of mounting an existing script: analysis, rhythm, picturization, movement, etc. Rehearsal time for this exercise is not to exceed ten hours.
Ten Minute Play
The final assignment in the course will consist of the production of a ten minute play. It can be NO LONGER THAN 15 MINUTES. You may cut slightly longer works to fit within the time limit; you may also excerpt a scene from a longer work. This may be any play with dialogue in a Realistic style, and may require no more than four actors (2 or 3 strongly recommended). Selection is entirely up to you, though I am certainly available to help select scripts. Several play anthologies will be made available to you, and a plethora of other collections is available online or through Summit. The plays will be performed in an evening showcase which will occur in the Pelton Theatre. We will go over a shared groundplan in class. Rehearsal time is not to exceed 20 hours.

Please note: for a variety of reasons, we will be providing our own technical support. University materials are not available for the final showcases.

Also note that the vast majority of the projects in this class require extensive work outside class. I have given you class time when at all possible, but you must take the initiative and make intelligent decisions about your schedule. The strength of your projects will be directly proportional to the amount of time and care you give them outside class.

Policies
Attendance
Theatre is a collaborative art. Since so much of the process of learning about directing involves interacting with your peers in class, attendance is mandatory. After two absences, your grade will drop one full letter. Each additional absence will continue to lower your grade. Four absences will constitute an automatic failing grade of F. Two tardies equal one absence.

Participation
Participation is crucial in a course like this; your active, thoughtful participation is actively sought and encouraged. Your participation score will be noted daily, based on the following criteria: your willingness in discussion to engage your own questions and listen respectfully to others, having any reading or written assignments fully prepared on time, and your willingness to bring supportive energy to class each day.

Due Dates
No late work will be accepted.

Costumes/Props/Scenery
Willamette University Theatre materials are not available for Directing I.
Evaluation

This is a topic which forces subjective evaluation, both in terms of product and of process. If you are ever unclear about grading procedures or grades earned, please see me immediately.

You will be graded on these assignments:
- Participation
- Rehearsal Observation
- Unit Breakdown 1
- Unit Breakdown 2
- Groundplan
- Play Analysis
- Concept Presentation
- Rehearsal Schedule/Progress Report
- Journal
- Work Book
- Summary

- Open Scenes
- TBA play scene
- Ten Minute Play

- Observed Rehearsal
- Showcase Prep
- Showcase Conduct

The grade weights break down as follows:
- Participation 10%
- Written Work 40%
- Performance Work 50%
## Course Schedule

**Week 1**
- Aug 30: Orientation
- Sept 1: Getting started, Dramatic Action and Authority

**Week 2**
- Sept 6: Studio work
- Sept 8: Studio work

**Week 3**
- Sept 13: Studio work
- Sept 15: Language & Physical Action

**Week 4**
- Sept 20: Studio work
- Sept 22: Studio work

**Week 5**
- Sept 27: Studio work
- Sept 29: Studio work

FYI: Smash runs 9.29-10.15

**Week 6**
- Oct 4: Image/Research
- Oct 6: Script Discovery: Tools

**Week 7**
- Oct 11: Rehearsal Units, Images, Personalization
- Oct 13: Concept

**Week 8**
- Oct 18: Studio work and prep
- Oct 20: TBA play Scene

**Week 9**
- Oct 25: TBA play Scene
- Oct 27: Demo Concept Presentation

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Week 10  
**AUDITIONS THIS WEEK**

- Nov 1  
  Concept Presentations 1&2  
  10 Minute Play Analysis & Unit Breakdown Due

**AUDITIONS THIS WEEK**

- Nov 3  
  Rehearsals, Working with Actors & Acting Specifics  
  Ahart Ch. 33; 22-24

Week 11

- Nov 8  
  Spatial Organization and Groundplans  
  Ahart Part Six

- Nov 10  
  Blocking & Movement  
  Observations due

FYI: *PeopleDance* runs 11.10-11.19

Week 12

- Nov 15  
  Picturization/Unity  
  Rehearsal Schedule/Progress Report Due

- Nov 17  
  Issues of Style  
  Ahart Ch. 15-18, 21

Week 13

- Nov 22  
  Studio work

- Nov 24  
  NO CLASS: Thanksgiving break

Week 14

- Nov 29  
  Studio work

- Dec 1  
  Letting Go & Studio work  
  Ahart Ch. 35

Week 15

- Dec 5  
  TBA Work Call: Directors and available actors: load in  
  8:30 PM Tech Run Showcase

- Dec 6  
  7 PM & 8:30 PM SHOWCASES  
  STRIKE: 11 PM

  MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE YOUR CASTS KNOW TO STAY FOR STRIKE!!

- Dec 8  
  Course Evaluations, Debrief  
  Work Book, Summary & Journal Due

Week 16

*There will be no class meeting during finals week.*