Mission Statement:

Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA-TELEVISION

COURSE #: CTVU 360

COURSE TITLE: Directing and Actors

SEMESTER: Spring 2011

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION: Tuesday, 9a - 12 noon, Location COM 104

Instructor: Booker T. Mattison
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1pm – 4pm & Wednesday 10am – 1pm

Office Location: COM 256

All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course is intended to provide Cinema/Television students with practical tools for directing actors on the stage and screen. Additionally, this class offers an understanding of acting technique as well as an understanding of process and product oriented direction.

**RATIONALE/COURSE OVERVIEW**

Whether Hitchcock said that “actors are cattle” or that “actors should be treated like cattle” is beside the point. Particularly when many student directors are so consumed with making “their movie” that actors and their performances become mere props at the mercy of their ego and vision. Not so in this class. Students will gain a fundamental understanding of how actors hear, intuit, do and become. Each student will be equipped to become an “actor’s director” and demonstrate knowledge of the tools needed to effectively audition, cast, rehearse, make adjustments on set and develop genuine relationships with every director’s most valuable commodity - actors.

**CINEMA-TELEVISION PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

To reclaim the power of "Story" and to weave Christian values and enduring truths in infinitely fresh and relevant ways.

To allow students to explore and refine their craft through observation, intense study and practice.

To grow artists who can create media infused with the Light to those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

**ACTOR COACHING OUTCOMES**

At the end of this course students will:

- Be comfortable working with actors at every stage of the creative process;
- Recognize and fully embrace the power and importance of actors, their craft and their contribution to the creative process;
- Articulate ideas in class discussion and offer constructive criticism;
- Understand the language of actors and acting for the purpose of getting stellar performances for film, television and stage.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Students must complete all assignments on time; lateness will result in ½ a grade penalty per day.

2. Students will be quizzed on acting and script analysis terms.

3. Each student must complete a **Final Project:**
• video tape at least 10 minutes of an actual rehearsal from your film
  OR
• video tape at least 10 minutes of you directing a scene on the set of your film.

This will be a significant part of your final grade.

4. We will regularly put the lecture topic into practice by acting and directing in class.

5. This course will be most effective if you are workshopping a screenplay that you are going to direct.

6. Students should feel free to conference with me several times throughout the semester to discuss progress and challenges with directing actors, your script or film; emails will be responded to promptly.

REQUIRED TEXT:


GRADING CRITERIA:

Quizzes: 20%
Classroom Discussion: 20%
Classroom Acting & Directing Exercises: 20%
**Final Project**: 10-Minute video of an actual rehearsal OR you directing a scene from your own film or play 40%

Attendance and participation are **MANDATORY** for passing this class. We will create a conservatory environment for the purpose of preparing you to “do.” Please make arrangements with fellow classmates in case you miss class to receive the most updated notes and announcements.

WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE:

**Week #1**
January 4, 2011

Class introduction (review of syllabus and requirements). Discussion of your goals, your purpose, and expectations. Divide class into work teams.

**Lecture**: If not us, then who?

Screen clip from “All About You”
For next session: Read pages 3 – 26 in *A Sense of Direction*. Decide on the script or play you will use for your **Final Project**. You will get the most out of this class if you are workshopping a script or play that you are presently working on.

**Week #2**  
**January 11, 2011**  
**Lecture: Art, Unity, Consciousness, Belief – God and His point of view in your work**

Be prepared to answer the WHY QUESTIONS on pages 23 – 24 of *A Sense of Direction* as it relates to your script or play and explain this to the class. Feedback will be given from the class and me.

For next session: Read pages 1-11; 49-76 in *Directing Actors*.

Bring to class a **MONOLOGUE**, 1 minute in length, from a teleplay, screenplay or play. The script for your Final Project would be ideal. If not, the monologue should feature a character that you could potentially be cast as. Have monologue memorized to present in class.

**Week #3**  
**January 18, 2011**

**Lecture: Casting, Audition Techniques.**

Full monologues performed in class. You should be off book.

Be prepared to conduct an audition and take an actor through at least one improvisation based on need. (Again, if you have your script for your **Final Project**, use that).

For next session: Read pages 141-162 in *Directing Actors*. Bring in an object (a prop from your script perhaps?) for next week’s Sense Memory exercise.

**Week #4**  
**January 25, 2011**

**Lecture: Directing Actors and Audition Techniques cont.**

Be prepared to engage in and lead a Sense Memory exercise and to participate in an Affective Memory exercise. Time permitting we will do an Observational exercise.

Quiz on the following terms:

a. Emotion Memory  
b. As if (Magic if)  
c. Concentration  
d. Given Circumstances  
e. Previous action  
f. Inner monologue
g. Objective 
h. Beats 
i. Obstacles 
j. Physical action 
k. Private moment 
l. Sense memory 
m. Spine/through action 
n. Stanislavski 
o. Subtext 
p. Super objective 
q. Action 
r. Essential action 
s. Literal action 
t. A few surprises.

We will do exercises based on some of the above terminology.

For next week: Have sides prepared for next week’s exercises (copies of what the actors will be reading). No more than one or two pages. It should have at least three beats in it. You will provide the talent with the given circumstances and previous action of the moment based on your script. This should be written out and handed to the actors and instructor at the beginning of class.

Week #5
February 1, 2011

Lecture: Directing the actor for the camera. Audition Techniques and exercises cont.

QUIZ: THIS WEEK

Be prepared to audition actors for your scene.

After the reading portion of the audition is finished, you will then conduct an improvisation, which should address actor problems or characteristics that you want to address. This will be recorded. We will play back the audition and you will critique.

For next week: Read pages 235-244 in Directing Actors. Select a section from your script for a cold read for next week.

Week #6
February 8, 2011

Lecture: Reconciling the role of the director in different mediums; Blocking; Problem Solving.
Be prepared to do a cold read from your script. Provide the sides (scripts of your scene) that actors can read from. The actors will perform the cold reading and you will critique.

For next week: Read pages 163-205 in *Directing Actors*

Week #7  
February 15, 2011

**Lecture: Script Analysis**  
Discuss script analysis as it pertains to your script. Be prepared to offer constructive criticism of your classmates’ works based upon what you have learned thus far. If time permits, we will do exercises in movement and blocking from your script or play.

For next week: Read pages 205 – 234 in *Directing Actors*. If your script doesn’t have character based action, select a scene that does. Break down the scene into beats. Each beat will be labeled with an active verb. This is the actor’s OBJECTIVE:

a. Your objective is composed of two elements: ESSENTIAL and LITERAL actions. Your essential action is what the actor does physically to accomplish the objective. For example: “Annie heads quickly for the door.” The other part of the objective is the Essential Action. This is the “why” of the objective. “Annie is desperate not to have Bert see the tears in her eyes, to see how much he has hurt her.” Write down Literal action and essential action for each beat transition.

b. Include a character/scene description for this moment including: overall objectives, sensory tasks, given circumstances, previous action. Write this on the back of your neutral scene.

c. Establish a context for the scene. This means that they are DOING something: eating breakfast; packing; trying to hide something; cleaning up; dressing; what? Include a prop list.

d. The scene should be meticulously blocked and the blocking recorded on a copy of your groundplan (play) or storyboards (script). We will shoot this in class next week to demonstrate the challenge of maintaining performance once you introduce the camera.

Week #8  
February 22, 2011

**Lecture: Staging actors, Directing for the shot, Directing for action.**

Discuss the challenges that face the director and the editor when performances aren’t properly managed on set, and across shots (WS, MS, CU).

We will begin shooting each person’s action scene. Remember, we are interested in character based action ONLY.
For next week: Enjoy your spring break, only THINK about your script and be prepared to jot down any ideas that may come to you.

February 28 – March 6, 2011 Modular week, no class.

Week #9
March 8, 2011

Lecture: Review the elements that we have already learned.

Finish shooting action sequences. We are less concerned with the shots than we are with staging, blocking and performance within the shot.

Week #10
March 15, 2011

Guest Speaker (Via Skype) Broadway and television actor Chad Coleman. We will screen “The Gilded Six Bits” which he starred in (and that I wrote and directed) and watch scenes of Chad from “The Wire” during the first half of class. The second half of class we will hear from Chad and you will have the opportunity to ask him questions. (Please use what we’ve learned in class as the basis for some of your questions).

For next week: Quiz on Script Analysis terms which you will receive at the end of class.

Week #11
March 22, 2011

Quiz on Script Analysis Terms.

We will go over the quiz in class because the purpose of this quiz is to ensure that you know the information. You will use it for the rest of your career.

Be prepared to shoot a Master Shot of a pivotal (or difficult) scene from your script with your work group. You are required to help the others in your group shoot their Master Shot before next week. I will toggle between groups to answer questions and to offer advice.

We will view your work in class and critique.

For next week: Bring in a Master Shot of your pivotal scene to show in class. The class will critique.

Week # 12
March 29, 2011

Be prepared to shoot a Medium Shot of your scene from last week with your work group. (You will rotate so that each person will have a chance to direct in class) Your Medium Shot can include over the shoulder shots (O.T.S.) or a two shot. The best technique is to shoot the scene twice, and show both versions, one focused on each actor. You will need to make adjustments to the blocking in your scene from the Master Shot. I will toggle between groups to answer questions and to offer advice.

We will view your work in class and critique.

You are required to help the others in your group shoot their Medium Shot before next week.

For next week: Bring in a Medium Shot of your scene to show in class.

Week #13
April 5, 2011

Be prepared to shoot a Close Up of the same scene from last week with your work group. I will toggle between groups to answer questions and to offer advice.

We will view your work in class and critique.

You are required to help the others in your group shoot their Close Up before next week.

For next week: Bring in a Close Up of your scene to show in class.

Week #14
April 12, 2011

Catch up from previous.

For next week: Bring to class a short scene with the following requisites:

1. No more than 4-5 pages.
2. It must have a climax that involves physical touching, embrace, touch, hit.
3. Hand in one copy, have copies for your actors.
4. This will be the last scene that you will do for this class. It should have beginning-middle-end.
5. You can use your work group actors OR you can bring in actors from outside.
6. This is your final scene. It should be put on video. This final scene on video has to have close ups, medium shots, and wide shots in it.
7. You must have a moment of strong physical interaction in the scene.

8. STUDENT PRESENTATION: bring to class a DVD of a physical action scene moment that you feel is particularly effective. Holding, touching, slapping, hitting, embracing, kissing, whatever.

**Week #15**
**April 17, 2011**

Bring your scenes to class to screen. We will critique. I will answer any questions you have about your Final Project. Hopefully, the totality of the class will make the Final Project a piece of cake!

**Week #16**
**April 24, 2011**

FINAL PRESENTATION
Show Final Project in class. To reiterate:

1. It must include close ups/ medium shots/ and wide shots.
2. It must include a physical action moment.
3. It should be shot in the order that the scene takes place.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

The instructor along with the Regent University community of teachers and scholars upholds the standard of academic integrity. Any instances of academic dishonesty (e.g., lying, cheating, defrauding) or plagiarism (e.g., failure to acknowledge indebtedness to another for the source of salient points, presenting the concepts or writings of another as one’s own) will not be tolerated. In addition to receiving an F on the assignment, additional discipline as noted in the Regent University Catalog and student handbook may also be in order.

**INCOMPLETE GRADES POLICY:**

*Students desiring an incomplete must submit their request to the course instructor and academic dean prior to the end of the term.* An incomplete grade will be given in a regular course only for legitimate deficiencies due to illness, emergencies or extraordinary reasons acceptable to the professor, including equipment breakdown or shortages, and not because of neglect on the student’s part. *Incompletes require the final approval of the school dean or his/her authorized representative.* A regular grade will be given by the instructor if all requirements for the course are submitted by the end of the
following academic term. The instructor will submit the new grade to the Registrar’s Office no later than two weeks after the beginning of the subsequent term. If all work is not submitted by the end of the term following the granting of the incomplete, a grade of FX (NP for pass/fail courses) will be posted automatically unless a Request for Extension of Incomplete has been approved and submitted to the Registrar’s Office. The FX shall be counted as an F in the computation of the GPA. Any student desiring reinstatement to the course after an FX or NP has been posted must register for the course in a subsequent term and pay the full current tuition for the course.

IN PROGRESS GRADES:

In Progress grades shall be given when work is not completed by the end of the term for the following academic work: independent studies, internships, practica, portfolios, theses and dissertations. An IP is also an appropriate grade for courses in which the completion of course requirements for ALL students extends beyond the academic term in which the course is offered. An IP may be continued to a maximum of two terms when the student requests an extension and the approved form is submitted to the Registrar’s Office prior to the end of the first term. If the requirements for removal of the IP grade are not completed by the end of these two terms, a grade of FX (NP for pass/fail courses) will be posted automatically. Exceptions may be made for dissertations, which may continue without penalty. Any student desiring reinstatement to the course after an FX or NP has been posted must register for the course in a subsequent term and pay the full current tuition for the course.

- Please review the following links at [www.regent.edu](http://www.regent.edu) for important information on University policies:
- Academic Calendar/Registrar Information
- Bookstore
- Honor/Plagiarism Policy
- Regent Library
- Student Services (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- Technical Support – University Helpdesk
- Grading Policies (incompletes, extensions, IPs, etc.)
- Student Course Evaluations
- DISABILITY STATEMENT:
  The student is responsible for contacting director of student life at 757.352.4867 to request accommodations, provide necessary documentation, and make arrangements with each instructor.
  The following website is designed to help our disabled students learn of their rights and responsibilities with regards to disability services. The site also has resources for faculty to become better informed of their responsibilities towards the disabled students in their classes.
  [http://ww.regent.edu/disabilities](http://ww.regent.edu/disabilities)
At times, due to unforeseen circumstances, course content may be subject to change. Please check with your professor to insure you have the most recently updated Syllabus for this course.

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