

# Thea 311: Directing 1

Fall 2010  
MW 12:30-2:20  
Brodie 245

Dr. Melanie Blood  
Brodie 121  
x5840, [blood@geneseo.edu](mailto:blood@geneseo.edu), IM: TheaProfonCall  
Office hrs: MWF 11:30, by apptmt

**Required texts**, available at Sundance Books or college bookstore:

- 1) *Contemporary Stage Directing* by George Black. International Thomson Publishing; (February 1997). Ppb. ISBN: 0030173337
  - 2) *Wadworth Anthology of Drama*. 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. William Worthen, Ed. Ppb. ISBN: 0838407501
- Some required readings, handouts, assignment descriptions will be on mycourses.

**Recommended texts**, may not available at bookstores:

- 1) *Museum* by Tina Howe
- 2) *Mystery of Edwin Drood* by Rupert Holmes.
- 3) Stratford shows you write on: 2 out of *Dangerous Liaisons* by Christopher Hampton, *Kiss Me Kate* by Cole Porter, and/or *Evita* by Lloyd Weber/Rice.

Required Performances:

- 1) *Museum* by Tina Howe, directed by Dr. Kaplan. Tues 9/28-Sun 10/3. 8 pm, Sun at 2 pm, Black Box. Tickets \$8. Brodie Box Office: x5833 or [bbo.geneseo.edu](mailto:bbo.geneseo.edu)
- 2) *Mystery of Edwin Drood* by Rupert Holmes. Directed by Melanie Blood. Alice Austin Theatre. Wed 11/17-Sat 11/20, 8 pm, Sun at 2 pm. Tickets \$8. Students. Brodie Box Office: x5833 or [bbo.geneseo.edu](mailto:bbo.geneseo.edu)
- 3) 2 professional productions; see strongly recommended Stratford productions. Other choices must be pre-approved by me.

**Strongly Recommended Performances on trip to Stratford Festival:** October 8-10. See *Dangerous Liaisons* by Christopher Hampton, Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*, and Lloyd Weber/Rice's *Evita*– and get two nights accommodation with breakfast in Stratford. More information forthcoming. Write director analyses of two of these to complete your professional show analysis requirement; otherwise you must get 2 professional shows approved by me.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will learn the role of the director in the theatrical production process through practical experience. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. create meaningful dramatic compositions,
2. analyze and interpret a text for its theatrical elements,
3. develop and present an artistic interpretation of a play through text analysis, research, and rehearsal
4. discern and discuss choices made by other directors in stage productions, verbally and in writing, and
5. effectively use theatrical production processes, such as auditions, casting, rehearsals of many kinds, groundplans, design meetings, and technical rehearsals.
6. The course will be on directing for a modern, realistic theatre because this provides the groundwork for directing in other styles.

## Course requirements:

1. **CLASSWORK:** You are expected to be present, to be prepared for, and to actively participate in all classroom activities. Three absences will lower your classwork grade to an E. Three instances of tardiness will equal one absence. Late class work will only be accepted if you arrange for it in advance; late written work will lose one full letter grade for every 24 hours that it is late. As director, you are the leader of the theatrical team and can NEVER be unprepared, late, or absent. (10% of final grade)
2. **10 EXERCISES** are due in class and will be explained in detail before they are due; most are explained on mycourses. All written material should be typed. (25% of final grade)

- 1: Story in 3 snapshots (due W 9/8)
2. Blank Scene (due W 9/15)
3. French Scene/Structural Analysis of *Glass Menagerie* ; see Black p. 64 (due M 9/20)
4. Scene Analysis due for midterm scene, using handout by Hodge (M 9/27)
5. Expanded matrices for (see Black pp. 42-43) *Glass Menagerie*, *Museum*, and the play your first scene is from. (due W 10/13)
6. Groundplan and scenic requirements for *Fences* (due W 10/25)
7. Acting a Director exercise: research a director, living or dead and present her/him IN CHARACTER in a five-minute presentation. (due 11/8 and 11/10)
8. Research (3 media: web, print, visual) on your play for Final Scene (due 11/15 and 11/17)
9. Collage on your play for Final Scene (due M 11/29)
10. Rehearsal proposal: define and solve a specific problem for Final Scene (due M 12/13)

**3. DIRECTOR ANALYSES:** You are required to see the productions of *Museum* by Tina Howe, *Mystery of Edwin Drood* by Rupert Holmes, and two professional productions, and to write a three page, typed analysis of the DIRECTOR'S work for these four productions. Papers can be placed in drop boxes in mycourses or hard copy. I strongly urge you to join the SOTA trip to Stratford, but you can select to attend two other professional shows if you get my approval. Cothurnus will travel to Stratford, Ontario Oct 8-10 to see three plays. You may substitute the third of these productions for a Geneseo production or write more director analyses for extra credit. (Due M 10/4 for *Museum*, W10/13 for Stratford shows, due M 11/22 for *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. (4 total for 20% of final grade)

**4. Your FIRST SCENE** will be a three-minute segment from *A Doll's House*, *True West*, *Fences*, *Trifles*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Valley Song*, *Death of a Salesman*, or *The Cherry Orchard*. If you would like to pick a scene from another play in the realistic tradition you must first have it approved by me. You may cast from within or outside class, but actors must be willing to be in class for both your first and final drafts. Grades will be based on both presentations and your book. You may direct a scene for the Freshman showcase in place of the class midterm assignment, if it is scheduled for Oct 1 as it has been in the past.

**Director's book** for scene 1 should include: expanded matrix, text with scene analysis, cuttings if applicable, groundplan, blocking, notes. (Selection due W 9/22, scene and book due M 10/18, 20% of final grade)

**5. Your FINAL SCENE** will be presented during the final examination time. Choose a scene from any of the plays from Ibsen on, in a realistic tradition, found in the Wadsworth anthology. You have ten to twelve minutes for both the scene and setting/striking the stage. Auditions will be held for final scenes for the entire class. Cast will be chosen by audition, and actors must be willing to be in class for both your first and final drafts. Exercises 8-10 above refer to the play you select for your final scene. Note that we will have a final dress rehearsal of all scenes Wednesday 12/15, 12-3 pm.

On the day of your final, you should turn in a **Director's book** for your scene, including expanded matrix for the whole play, text of scene with structural and scene analysis, cuttings, research (from exercise 8), rehearsal schedule, rehearsal notes (including exercise 10), blocking, groundplan, prop/cost/set/light notes. Grades will be based on both presentations and your book. (Selection due M 11/1, scene due at final exam, Monday 12/20, 12-3 pm; 25% of final grade)

**Final Grades** will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation:	10%
10 Class exercises:	25%
4 Director analyses:	20%
Midterm scene:	20%
Final scene:	25%

## Daily Schedule

### Syllabus:

- M 8/30 Course Introduction  
W 9/1 Read Black Intro and ch. 1 “Director, Playwright, and Theatrical Event”
- M 9/6 LABOR DAY—No classes  
W 9/8 **Exercise 1 due:** “3 snapshots” scene
- M 9/13 Read Black ch. 6 “The Director’s Five Dimensions”; read Williams’ *Glass Menagerie*  
W 9/15 **Exercise 2 due:** Blank Scene
- M 9/20 **Exercise 3 due:** French scene/Structural analysis of *Glass Menagerie*  
Read Black ch. 3 “Understanding the Text”  
W 9/22 Read handout from Hodge, *Play Directing*, pp. 34-37, on scene analysis  
**Scene selection and cast for midterm scene due**
- M 9/27 **Exercise 4 due:** Scene Analysis of midterm scene  
Midterm scene rehearsals for freshman showcase scenes  
W 9/29 Rehearsals of midterm scene: Read throughs/1<sup>st</sup> blocking rehearsals (5 scenes)

**Required production: SOTA presents *Museum* by Tina Howe**, directed by Dr. Kaplan. Tues 9/28-Sun 10/3. 8 pm, Sun at 2 pm, Black Box. Tickets \$8. Brodie Box Office: x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

**Required production (IF it is used as a midterm scene by classmates):** Freshman Showcase Fri 10/1 4 pm, free. If any class members present midterm scenes at the freshman showcase, the whole class must attend and fill out peer evaluations.

- M 10/4 **Director analysis due for *Museum*** (in drop box or hard copy; see assignment on drop box)  
Discuss Geneseo Production of *Museum*  
Rehearsals of midterm scene: Blocking/character work (3 scenes)  
W 10/6 Read Black ch. 2 “The Production Matrix” -- discuss  
Rehearsals of first scene: Blocking/character work or run through (6 scenes)

**Strongly Recommended trip to Stratford Festival:** October 8-10. See *Dangerous Liaisons* by Christopher Hampton, Cole Porter’s *Kiss Me Kate*, and Lloyd Weber/Rice’s *Evita*— and get two nights accommodation with breakfast in Stratford. More information forthcoming. Write director analyses of two of these to complete your professional show analysis requirement; otherwise you must get 2 professional shows approved by me.

- M 10/11 FALL BREAK – No classes  
W 10/13 Rehearsals of first scene: Blocked, off book (6 scenes)  
Read Black ch. 5 “Searching for Images” -- discuss  
**Exercise 5 due:** Expanded matrices for *Glass Menagerie*, *Museum*, and the show that contains your midterm scene
- M 10/18 **Midterm scenes** presented in class; turn in director’s books  
Write peer evaluations for ½ class.  
W 10/20 Discuss midterm scenes, video: Julie Taymor

**Optional show: SOTA presents *Kaleidoscope*.** Fri 10/22, 8 pm. Wadsworth Auditorium, free.

**Recommended show: VegSOUP presents *TBA***, Thurs-Sat 10/20-22, 8 pm. Black box theatre. Tickets \$5. Brodie Box Office: x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu. \*\*This show will be required if students use it for midterm or final scenes.

M 10/25 Read Black ch. 7 “Creating the Theatrical Environment” and Black ch. 8 “Designing the Groundplan”

W 10/25 Read: Wilson’s *Fences*  
**Exercise 6 due:** Groundplan and List of scenic requirements for *Fences*;  
Present them in class

M 11/1 Read Black ch. 9 “Auditions and Casting;” plan and hold auditions for Final Scenes;  
**Final Scene selections (cuttings, bring to class) due**

W 11/3 **Selection of a director for Exercise 7 due**  
AUDITION DAY (can be moved if we need to)

M 11/8 Read Black ch. 10 “Rehearsal”; discuss rehearsals,  
**Exercise 7:** Act a Director (10 directors) presentations in class  
**Final scene cast list rehearsal schedule due**

W 11/10 **Exercise 7:** Act a Director (10 directors) presentations in class  
Plan rehearsal schedules for final scene

M 11/15 **Exercise 8 (10 directors):** Research on play for Final Scene due: one web  
resource, one book (text), one visual medium; present research in class  
Introduce collage and rehearsal/production problems/solutions

W 11/17 **Exercise 8 (10 directors):** finish presenting research in class  
Read Black ch. 11 “Director and Actor”  
Rehearsals of final scenes: blocking/character work (2 scenes)

**Required show: SOTA and MTC present *Mystery of Edwin Drood*** by Rupert Holmes. Directed by Melanie Blood. Alice Austin Theatre. Wed 11/17-Sat 11/20, 8 pm, Sun at 2 pm. Tickets \$8. Students. Brodie Box Office: x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

M 11/22 **Director Analysis due for *Drood* due**  
Discuss *Drood*  
Rehearsals of final scenes: blocking/character work (2 scenes)

W 11/24 THANKSGIVING BREAK – No classes

M 11/29 **Exercise 9:** Collage on play for Final Scene due; present in class  
Rehearsals of final scenes: blocking/character work (2 scenes)

W 12/1 Rehearsals of final scenes: blocking/character work (6 scenes)

**Recommended Production: GENseng presents *Strictly Dandia*** by Sudha Buchar and Kristine Landon-Smith. Directed by Dr. Kaplan. Thurs 12/2 at 7, Fri 12/3 at 4, Sat 12/4 at 2, Black Box Theatre. Tickets \$8. at x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu.

M 12/6 Rehearsals of final scenes: blocked, on book (5-6 scenes)  
W 12/8 Rehearsals of final scenes: blocked, on book (5-6 scenes)

**Recommended Production: SOTA presents *An Evening’s Dances***. Thurs 12/9-Sun 12/12. 8 pm, Sun at 2pm, Austin Theatre. Tickets \$7. x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

M 12/13 **Exercise 10:** Rehearsal problem/solution due; present in class  
Rehearsals of final scenes: blocked, off book (2-3 scenes)

**Final Scene Dress Rehearsal:** (12:30 exam time) Wednesday 12/15, 12-3PM

**Final Exam:** (1:30 exam time) Public performance of Final Scenes

Monday 12/20, 12-3 PM (or on weekend if ENTIRE class agrees)