

**THTR 305a Directing (Section 63025R)**

**Units: 4**

**Spring 2021 —Tue/Thu—Noon-1:50pm**

**ONLINE (01/06/2021)**

**Instructor: Tim Dang**

**Office: N/A**

**Online Office Hours:** Generally one hour before class and/or a half hour after class by appointment.

**Contact Info:** [timdang@usc.edu](mailto:timdang@usc.edu)

**Teaching Assistant or Assistant Instructor: N/A**

**Contact Info: N/A**

**Course Description**

Examination of:

- A) basic directorial principles and vision of play production to include pre-production analysis, casting, rehearsal procedures, and storytelling;
- B) relationship of the director to actor, playwright, and design team; and
- C) integration of technical aspects of production.

Course focus will emphasize experience in developing strength and confidence in the areas of communication, collaboration, and leadership skills.

**Learning Objectives**

- 1) To discuss the basic principles and procedures required of a stage director to mount a theatrical production.
- 2) To cultivate leadership skills necessary in the creation of an ensemble brought together for the purpose of play production.
- 3) To discover the role of the director as a collaborative individual able to articulate and shape the vision while embracing the creativity of the design team and actors.
- 4) To facilitate practical experience in the role of director through classroom exercises, in collaborations with designers, and scene-work with actors.
- 5) To be familiar with other facets of theatre production such as budgets, marketing, publicity, script development, audience engagement, and fundraising.

**Prerequisite(s):** Admittance to the BFA in Acting for Stage, Screen and New Media

**Co-Requisite (s):** THTR 120A, THTR 140A and THTR 125

**Concurrent Enrollment:** THTR 120A, THTR 140A and THTR 125

**Recommended Preparation:** N/A

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

Prices and book list are subject to change.

- Reza. *God of Carnage*. (Required)  
ISBN: 9780822223993

**New:** \$10.00  
**Used:** \$7.50  
**Rental:** \$7.50 (New), \$4.00 (Used)

- Weston. *Directing Actors*. (Required)  
**ISBN:** 9781615930135  
**eBook:** \$18.00

- Weston. *Directing Actors*. (Required)  
**ISBN:** 9780941188241  
**New:** \$29.95  
**Used:** \$22.50  
**Rental:** \$19.47 (New), \$11.98 (Used)

- Jory. *Tips: Ideas for Directors*. (Required)  
**ISBN:** 9781575252414  
**New:** \$19.95  
**Used:** \$15.00  
**Rental:** \$14.96 (New), \$7.98 (Used)

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- Winkler. *Kentucky*. (Required)  
**ISBN:** 9780822236221  
**New:** \$10.00  
**Used:** \$7.50  
**Rental:** \$7.50 (New), \$4.00 (Used)

### [Purchase from USC Bookstore](#)

- Play ***TBA-To Be Announced*** (Required Reading)
- Two **Plays of Your Choice** for your Directing Scene 2 and Directing Scene 3 (Final) Vision Play
- Three **Director's Journal** (word document that you will eventually pdf) is required and each journal has three sections: 1) A journal of notes taken during class; 2) Comments from observing your fellow classmates directing scenes; and 3) Play production research, vision statement, design elements, log (dates and summary of rehearsal process), copy of scene with blocking, prop list, etc. as you prepare your directing scene (from ***Kentucky*** or ***God of Carnage*** or ***TBA Play***) for Directing Scene 1 and for the two plays of your choice for Directing Scene 2 and Directing Scene 3 (Final).
- Students are responsible for providing necessary props, costumes and minimal background/set pieces for scene work. Please be prepared on the day that your scene is to be rehearsed in front of the class and performed for grading.
- Students must also make sure that the actors selected for their scene are available the day and time your scene is to be rehearsed/performed in class or pre-taped for grading.

- Budget into your time allotted the delegation of prepping your actors, zoom background, and prepping your design elements for your observed rehearsal, mid-term, and final.

\*These materials are available through the USC Bookstore, and most likely online (Amazon, Samuel French, Dramatist Publishing, TCG, etc).

**Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments**

<b>20 points</b>	Participation in class discussion, assignments, exercises, and observed rehearsals throughout semester
<b>15</b>	Directing Project 1 - A Scene or Finalizing a Design Aspect from <b><i>Kentucky</i></b> or <b><i>God of Carnage</i></b> or <b><i>TBA Play</i></b>
<b>10</b>	Submission of Director’s Journal 1 via email
<b>15</b>	Directing Project 2 – A Scene or Finalizing a Design Aspect from a play of your choice
<b>10</b>	Submission of Director’s Journal 2 via email
<b>20</b>	Directing Project 3 - A Scene or Finalizing a Design Aspect from a play of your choice
<b>10</b>	Submission of Director’s Journal 3 via email as your Final Extra Credit (TBA)

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**100 points**      Total Points Possible

**Grading Scale for SDA:** **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

**Grading Scale (Example)**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

**Attendance, Time Requirements, and Classroom Rules**

- 1) To give yourself the most positive experience in Directing 305A, be punctual, prepared, and responsible, as other students are depending on you. Remember, you are the director and you set the example and tone for the process.

- 2) This is a process-oriented class. Attendance is imperative. Class exercises and discussions are experimental in nature and make up work is not possible. Scheduled observed rehearsals that are missed will not/cannot be rescheduled.
- 3) Late work may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor and then will be docked no less than two points per day past due. All written work must be submitted by the deadline via email [timdang@usc.edu](mailto:timdang@usc.edu).
- 4) There are no excuses for absences. Being late to class (or leaving early before class has ended or leaving for an extended period during class) three times constitute one absence.
- 5) Acting in other students 305A scenes are encouraged and will count as one point of extra credit towards your final grade. If this occurs in another section of 305A, please bring documentation of participation. A maximum of three extra credit points are possible for this class. If you participate in more than three directing 305A scenes, you will only receive three extra credit points at the end of the semester. You may participate in more than three scenes by your choice for your own skill building but do not overwhelm yourself with your course load. Acting in 305A scenes requires full memorization of scenes performed.
- 6) Each student will maintain a Director's Journal containing: classroom notes, observations, and comments upon viewing other students' in-class rehearsals and scene presentations.
- 7) Rehearsals outside of scheduled class time are required for a successful outcome in 305a. Be aware, scenes need often be cast with students outside of this section's enrollment. You may not act in your own directing scene.
- 8) You may not act in your own scene and direct yourself.
- 9) Logistical prowess in terms of time management for self and others is required.
- 10) Attention to essential props, costumes, and set pieces for scene work is encouraged. Lack of attention in this area will affect your grade.
- 11) Your Vision Playbook (section 3 of the Director's Journal) includes all additional prep material specific to your rehearsal process for the first, second, and final scenes due at the time of student director's presentation. Your Vision Playbook should include (for midterm, second scene, and final projects) the following components;
  - One page Vision of your directing the entire production (not just the scene performed in class)
  - Director's report of your rehearsals and process – what happened at each rehearsal or a report of all your design meetings.
  - Reference and research pertinent to the play – online photos, links, articles etc. Or set design/costume design sketches or links to sound cues etc.
  - Ground plan, environmental sketches to the best of your ability, images of wardrobe, color palette, lighting descriptions, sound scapes
  - Your character descriptions and prop lists. The director's rehearsal script with margin notes and beat breakdown.

- A one page summary discussion of the director’s experience and development of process. For your summary discussion, what surprised you? Was anything exactly what you expected? What did you find “easy”? What provided the greatest challenge? Be sure to also include ideas/projections as to how you would fine-tune the process next time. Make use of references from Judith Weston and Jon jory’s books and pertinent classroom discussions.
- Director’s Journal is handed in the day when all mid-term scene presentations are complete. Director’s journal is handed in for the second time when all scene presentations are complete on October 22. Director’s Journal is handed in for the third time on the day of finals when all scene presentations have been completed.
- Check your USC email regularly. Scheduling changes and other timely information may be sent electronically.
- Cell phones are to be turned off for the duration of class.
- Electronic capture of any portion of class is strictly prohibited without prior approval of the instructor.

There is no spring break this semester - but there are Spring Wellness Days. They are: 3/12, 3/23, 4/7, 4/22, 4/30. *A Wellness Day is a day on which there will be no classes and no classwork expected of students. Students are encouraged to use this time to rest, exercise, and connect with friends and family.*

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown\***

Week 1	1/19	Introduction. Course outline review and expectations. Exercise: The mission and the vision.
	1/21	Discussion: The role of the director and your relationship to other theater makers. Exercise: Purposeful Mingle (Read Tips: Ideas for Directors: Casting and Vocabulary pg 2-27 by 1/26)
Week 2	1/26	Discussion: Casting and Vocabulary. Talent , Networking, Authenticity. Exercise: Tell My Story, Tell Your Story (Read Kentucky by Leah Nanako Winkler by 1/28)
	1/28	Discussion: Kentucky. Initial instinct, play analysis, forming a vision. Themes, characters, tone (Read Tips: Ideas for Directors: The Play, The Team pg 30 – 59 by 2/02)
Week 3	2/02	Discussion: Auditions and objectives. Exercise: Perform Scenes from Kentucky (Read God of Carnage by 2/04)
	2/04	Discussion: God of Carnage. Themes, character, tone. (Read Tips: Ideas for Directing: Table Work and Blocking pgs 68-116 by 2/09)
Week 4	2/09	Discussion: Working with actors and other collaborative members of the production. Exercise: The design of Fairview (Read TBA Play by 2/11)
	2/11	Discussion: TBA Play. Themes, character, tone (Choose scenes to

- direct from either Kentucky or God of Carnage or TBA Play by 2/16;  
Read Tips: Ideas for Directors pg 118-174 Working With The Actor by 2/16)
- Week 5      2/16      Discussion: Working with the Actor, Rehearsals and the environment you create for the story and the environment for your artists. Exercise: Work scenes from TBA Play. (Read Tips: Ideas for the Director pg 176-218 Rehearsal Process, Read Directing Actors pg 1-76 Result Direction and Quick Fixes and Moment by moment by 2/18)
- 2/18      Discussion: Rehearsal Process, Result Direction, Quick Fixes, Technical elements to tell the story – sound, lights, costumes, props, set. Exercise: The Deserted Island
- Week 6      2/23      Observed Rehearsal: Shaping your Kentucky/Fairview/TBA scene – blocking 50% of class about 20 minutes each
- 2/25      Observed Rehearsal: Shaping your Kentucky/ Fairview/TBA scene – blocking 50% of class about 20 minutes each
- Week 7      3/02      Guest Artist #1 TBA, Director to introduce students to more of the professional world and the directing process
- 3/04      Mid-Term Presentation of Scenes from Kentucky or Fairview or TBA play. Director’s Journal due by end of class as part of Mid-term. **Mandatory Attendance** (Read Tips: Ideas for the Director pg 220-262 Comedy, The Final Stage, the Director’s Homework, and Directing Actors pg 77-159 Listening and Talking, Actors Choices, Transitions, Actors Resourcs and Training by 3/09)
- Week 8      3/09      Director’s Journal returned at beginning of class; Discussing the process so far; Preparing for your Vision Play 2; In-Class Exercise on Visualization; Sign-up for your time for Vision Play Presentation 2, Observed Rehearsal 2; and Play Presentation 2. (Read Directing Actors pg 163—233 Script Analysis and Casting by 3/11)
- 3/11      Guest Artist #2 TBA - Discussion– Director to introduce students to more of the professional world and the directing process (Read Directing Actors pg 235 – 308 Rehearsal and Shooting by 3/16)
- Week 9      3/16      Directing Play/Project 2 Vision Play Presentations and discussion.
- 3/18      Observed Design Meeting/Rehearsal: Second scene – your Vision Play/Project (production meeting and planning, scene blocking and acting, research – 50% of class at about 20 minutes each)
- Week 10     3/23      Spring Wellness Day - OFF
- 3/25      Obseerved Design Meeting/Rehearsal: Second scene – your Vision Play/Project (production meeting and planning, scene blocking and acting, research – 50% of class at about 20 minutes each)
- Week 11     3/30      Presentation of Design Concept Meeting/Performance Scene of your choice. Director’s Journal due by end of class. **Mandatory Attendance**
- 4/01      Director’s Journal returned at beginning of class. Preparing for your Vision Play 3; In-Class Exercise on Sound; Sign-up for your time for

		Vision Play Presentation 3, Observed Rehearsal 3; and Play Presentation 3. Guest Artists #3 TBA Discussion – Guest artistic director/director to introduce students to more of the professional world in running your own company and the directing process.
Week 12	4/06	Directing Play/Project 3 Vision Play Presentations and discussion.
	4/08	Discussion: Other facets of theatre production – Budgets, marketing, publicity, fundraising.
Week 13	4/13	Observed Design Meeting/Rehearsal: Third scene – your Vision Play/Project (production meeting and planning, scene blocking and acting, research – 50% of class at about 25 minutes each)
	4/15	Observed Concept Meeting/Rehearsal: Third scene – your Vision Play/Project (production meeting and planning, scene blocking and acting, research – 50% of class at about 25 minutes each)
Week 14	4/20	Observed Concept Meeting/Rehearsal: #2 Third scene – your Vision Play/Project (production meeting and planning, scene blocking and acting, research – 50% of class at about 30 minutes each)
	4/22	Spring Wellness Day - OFF
Week 15	4/27	Observed Concept Meeting/Rehearsal #2: Third scene – your Vision Play/Project (production meeting and planning, scene blocking and acting, research – 50% of class at about 25 minutes each)
	4/29	Last day of class – Wrap up – Summary of Semester
Final	5/12	Wednesday, May 12 2:00PM – 4:00PM PDT <b>Final Mandatory Attendance</b> Directing Scene 3 – Scene Performance or Design Concept. Your Directing Journal is due via email by 4:00pm on Wednesday May 12, 2021. Please email your final to Tim Dang at <a href="mailto:TimDang@usc.edu">TimDang@usc.edu</a> .

Your Directing Journal may be submitted as a Word file or PDF file. I will confirm receipt within 24 hours. If I do not confirm receipt, please send me an email regarding this. Your file may be too large and may have to be sent via dropbox or wetransfer.

\* This weekly breakdown is subject to change based on the needs and requirement of the class.

\*\*\*This syllabus serves as your contract for course 305A, Spring Semester 2021\*\*\*

**Policies Against Sharing Class Information - SCampus Section 11.12(B):**

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS**

Please be mindful of your time management. Self-care is so important during this historic unprecedented times of the pandemic. Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, or outside work, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards”

<http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

### **Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS)* – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling>.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)* – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp>.

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu>.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance* – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <http://equity.usc.edu>



*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support>

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa>

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <http://diversity.usc.edu>

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. <http://emergency.usc.edu>

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)*