

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ENGLISH FILM THEATRE & MEDIA STUDIES
TE KURA TOI WHAKAARI O AOTEAROA: NEW ZEALAND DRAMA SCHOOL
2008 COURSE INFORMATION SHEET
MASTER OF THEATRE ARTS (MTA) Directing

THEA 511

DIRECTING METHOD

Course Co-ordinator

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MTA PART 2 Programme Co-ordinator, Toi Whakaari
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Staff of VUW Theatre Programme and Toi Whakaari will occasionally share the teaching of this course, plus invited guests.

AR: Annie Ruth. CP: Christian Penny. DoD: David O'Donnell. BT: Bronwyn Tweddle. JD: John Downie. ME: Megan Evans. MW: Matthew Wagner DC: David Carnegie JS: Jennifer Shennan

Class Times and Venues

Trimesters 1 (Feb 29-May 30) and 2 (July 11-October 10).
Fridays 9-1 Practicum Studio 93 Kelburn Parade VUW
2-5 (research), Room 305, 77 Fairlie Terrace, VUW
Workshops and production projects at Toi Whakaari and VUW, tba.

Course Aims

This course aims to provide historical, theoretical, and practical approaches to the directing of aesthetic performances.

Course Objectives

By the completion of the course, students should:

- have developed approaches to articulating their own directing methodology.
- be increasingly familiar with the idea of praxis: formulating questions, examining them by experimentation, both practical and theoretical, and providing a concluding critique to the process.
- have been able to investigate and explore, both theoretically and practically, several aspects of the directing process.
- have developed a familiarity and ability with theatre procedures, including script analysis, devising, conceptualisation, montage, and mise-en-scene as applied to the directorial process.
- to have a sense of the development of directing methods over the past century, and in contemporary practice, and to identify the approaches and styles of different practitioners.
- have shared in, and have contributed to, the artistic and educational ethos provided by Toi Whakaari and Theatre Programme, VUW.

Course Content

A regular weekly class introduces selected ways (am) in which to think and apply directorial practice, followed (pm) by an open seminar in which ideas about 'research' and 'methodology' are variously addressed and presented. There are practical directing projects with performance outcomes in collaboration with students of both institutions. There is a research project and presentation on an individual director or artist, plus the keeping of a personal journal during the length of the course.

Required Texts

Students will develop their own individual list of readings as part of clarifying their own methodological directions. Reading material will be introduced during class sessions.

Recommended Texts

W B Worthen, ed: **Harcourt Brace Anthology of Drama** 3rd Edition (Fort Worth 1999).
Rebecca Schneider & Gabrielle Cody, eds: **Re:Direction** Routledge 2002.

Assessment (Pass/Fail)

a	General proposal of creative investigation (to be presented <u>week 1</u>)	5%
b	Methodology 1 Space/Time exercise with provided scenario/text. Realisation using MTA group. <u>Week 6</u> Written report back by <u>Week 7</u>	10%
c	Methodology 2 Specific proposal for 5 minute excerpt Realisation, using found collaborators. <u>Week 12</u> Written report back <u>Week 13</u>	10%
d	Personal Research Project Specific proposal Class presentation between <u>Weeks 13-15</u> Written report back by <u>Week 16</u>	20%
e	Methodology 3 Working to prepared brief with THEA 204 students. between <u>Weeks 18-21</u> Written report back by <u>Week 22</u>	20%
f	Methodology 4 Specific proposal for 10-15 minute excerpt Realisation, using found collaborators, <u>Weeks 23-24</u> Written report back by <u>Week 24+2</u>	20%

g Journal
Throughout

15%

Detailed descriptions of these assignments will be given in class. If you need postponement or extension to any assignment (eg: because of illness, or pressure of work) please negotiate this well in advance with the Course/Programme co-ordinators. Work completed to deadline with a demonstrated sense of good organisation is essential. All the assignments above must be completed for a Pass to be awarded. A high standard of attendance to both class and assignments is expected throughout.

How Assessment relates to Course Objectives

The main objective of the course is to develop an individual approach to finding aspects of a personal directing method. The morning sessions provide a hands-on studio practicum. The afternoon sessions provide a number of different provocations about 'methodology' and 'research'. Record and research into personal processes are kept in Journals, while more conventional reading and research into the field of directing is through both class presentation and written critical exposition proposing and critiquing that work. The marks for classwork will reflect good attendance, clear presentation, and strong participation in discussion.

MTA Journals

Guidelines

- The journal is a vehicle for reflection, on work you are doing, reading about, observing. It is not limited to performance work, but any art form or life event that has provoked thoughts and responses in you. Be interested in the fragments that feed you creatively and intellectually.
- It may include things you have read, discussions you have participated in, images and articles collected by you.
- It should preferably be a solid, hardbacked book of unlined paper, so that drawings and diagrams, etc., are easily part of it, and your expression is not confined to linear modes. The book should be no smaller than A4 size.
- If you are using this journal for reflections across more than one course, it would be useful to put headings that relate to a specific course, eg THEA 501, 512, etc. The journal is not a place for your general lecture notes, nor your intimate confessions.
- A suggestion is that you put work originated outside yourself – quotes, reviews, etc – on one side of the book, and your own thoughts and inventions on the other. However, the ordering of the journal is your own decision, with ease of retrieval (and readability!) the main criterion.

Individual Research Projects on Directors

Guidelines

Choose a practising artist whose work intrigues you - most probably a director or writer, but it can be a visual artist, an actor, a composer, etc.

Research: Actively pursue the work of your chosen person, using as many research means as are available to you - libraries, internet, av material, live performance. Look to understand how to view the work of your choice from a number of perspectives, particularly as a practice/craft, but importantly also from critical, theoretical, historical, political, and philosophical perspectives.

Class Presentation: Give a biographical outline of the person of your choice. Give some detailed attention to this person's approaches to training, rehearsal, or production. Short practical demonstrations of the director's method are encouraged.

Written paper of about 1500 words After completing the research and presentation, write a short critical proposition on your subject, focusing on the key creative and expressive investigations pursued by her/him, and how you now view them in relation to your own methodology. This paper should be handed in to the course co-ordinator one week following the completion of your class presentation.

THEATRE PROGRAMME FACILITIES

There are standard requirements regarding conduct within 77 FT, 83 FT, 85 FT, 93 KP and 225 Aro St:

Smoking

Due to NZ law changes smoking is not permitted anywhere on Theatre premises or within 3 metres of surrounding buildings. **Please smoke elsewhere and dispose of cigarette butts thoughtfully.**

Food

Food may only be consumed in the 77FT Green Room, and 85FT, 93KP and Aro St kitchen areas.

No beverages (with the exception of bottled water) are allowed in the studio theatre, dressing room, film room, library, foyer area, and 93 KP or 225 Aro St and 85FT(except kitchen areas listed above).

Student and staff using kitchen areas are strongly expected to clean up after themselves **Strictly no food or drink in the 85FT Digital Edit Suites.**

Alcoholic drinks are not to be brought onto the premises unless authorised by Programme Director Film or Programme Director Theatre

Green Room

The Green Room is available to students working in the Film and Theatre Programmes. **You are expected to clean up after yourselves** (this includes returning any mugs removed from the Green Room and operating the dishwasher).

Library

Students are encouraged to make full use of the Robert Lord Library at 77 Fairlie Terrace; however, please note that **books and department materials do not leave the building**. Please return books to shelves before you leave the library. Please do be aware that the library is doubling as an editing suite for some production courses, and that editing facilities are not to be touched unless you have made a booking with our our events co-ordinator, Lee Barry, [room 309, 77FT, Telephone: 463 5221] or our administrator, Kushla Beacon [room 307, 77FT , Telephone: 463 5359]. Please remember that the Library is a quiet study area.

End of Class

Rooms 306 (lecture theatre), 305, 205 (film room), 209 (seminar room), studios, studio foyer, 93 KP, 83 FT and 225 Aro St must have the desks and chairs returned to order for any following classes or rehearsals.

Lockers

Lockers are available to majoring drama students on Level 0 77FT. There are only 52 so once they run out those with double lockers will have to consider sharing. Students provide their own lock and key. See the Administrator in room 307. Access your lockers via back stairs through Green Room. Please make sure the door to the main stairwell remains shut. Access to lockers will not be available during the trimester break so please take everything with you at the end of this trimester and inform the Administrator if you are not taking a theatre subject next trimester.

Theatre Rules

There are more specific rules regarding safety and security within the premises occupied by Film and Theatre. These are unlikely to be relevant to this course as they are largely to do with practical work and use of the theatre, but please note them as posted up around the building and as listed in the FAT Book. This document is available on all Theatre course Blackboard sites.

Pin Boards

Students are welcome to use the pin boards located on level 3 of 77 Fairlie Terrace but you must get the poster/flyer date stamped by the Administrator and take responsibility for removing it

again once the information is no longer valid. This is limited to one poster/flyer per event. **Items that appear without the approval stamp may be removed without notice.**

General University Statutes and Policies

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html <
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html>

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>
<<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Academic integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times. **Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:**

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words. *Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Timetable

Fridays, Trimesters 1 and 2. 93 Kelburn Parade, and Room 305, 77 Fairlie Terrace.

MORNING SESSION 9 am-1 pm. PRACTICE & PRAXIS

These sessions are largely given over to on-the-floor work dealing with some fundamentals of performance directing, collaborating within the student group as well as working with professional theatre artists.

WEEK 1 Feb 29
Intro to Methodology
WEEK 2 7 Mar
Performance Space and Time
WEEK 3 14 Mar
Performance Space and Time

Week 4: no class - EASTER

WEEK 5 28 Mar
Performance Space and Time
WEEK 6 4 Apr
Methodology 1: Space and Time. CLASS SHOWING
WEEK 7 11 Apr
Working with Text

TRIMESTER RECESS (Term break) 2 weeks

WEEK 8 2 May
Working with Text
WEEK 9 9 May
Working with Text
WEEK 10 16 May
Working with Text
WEEK 11 23 May
Working with Text
WEEK 12 30 May
Methodology 2: Working with Text. CLASS SHOWING

WINTER RECESS 5 weeks

WEEK 13 11 Jul
Directing the devised production
WEEK 14 18 Jul
Directing the devised production
WEEK 15 25 Jul
Directing the devised production
WEEK 16 1 Aug
Vocabularies (design, light, sound, costume, object etc)
WEEK 17 8 Aug
Vocabularies
WEEK 18 15 Aug
Vocabularies
Methodology 3: working to a brief with THEA 204 students.
TBA weeks 18-21

TRIMESTER RECESS (Term break) 2 weeks

WEEK 19 5 Sept

WEEK 20	Methodology re-examined: JD/CP 12 Sept
WEEK 21	Working with the Performer: Shakespearean dramaturgy: DC 19 Sept
WEEK 22	Working with the Performer: Asian Performance: ME 26 Sept
WEEK 23	Working with the Performer: Object and Mask Performance 3 Oct
WEEK 24	Methodology 3: Realisation and Critique: JD/CP <u>CLASS SHOWING</u> 10 Oct
	Methodology 3: Realisation and Critique: JD/CP <u>CLASS SHOWING</u>

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

2.00-2.30 Housekeeping

2.30-4.30 Staff and postgraduate student Colloquia and Research Seminars (TBA)

WEEK 1	29 Feb Social event; MTA's, staff.
WEEK 2	7 Mar Visitor: Mike Leggett

WEEK 3	14 Mar Wellington International Festival: Critiques
WEEK 4	21 Mar No class - Easter
WEEK 5	28 Mar FORUM: What is the history of directing? 1: Theatre
WEEK 6	4 Apr FORUM: What s the history of directing? 2: Film
WEEK 7	11 Apr TRIMESTER BREAK - 2 WEEKS
WEEK 8	2 May
WEEK 9	9 May
WEEK 10	16 May
WEEK 11	23 May
WEEK 12	30 May Critiques of public performances in Wellington MIDWINTER BREAK - 5 WEEKS
WEEK 13	11 Jul MTA Research project presentations 1
WEEK 14	18 Jul MTA Research project presentations 2
WEEK 15	25 Jul MTA Research project presentations 3
WEEK 16	1 Aug
WEEK 17	8 Aug
WEEK 18	15 Aug Critiques of public performances in Wellington TRIMESTER BREAK - 2 WEEKS
WEEK 19	5 Sept
WEEK 20	12 Sept
WEEK 21	19 Sept
WEEK 22	26 Sept

WEEK 23 3 Oct
Critiques of public performances in Wellington

WEEK 24 10 Oct
FORUM: subject?

